

THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

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[REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.]

No. 802.—VOL. XII.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 20, 1869.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[THE TWOFOLD MYSTERY.]

THE FLAW IN THE DIAMOND.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Miss Arlington's Will," "Leaves of Fate," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXI.

WHEN Mark Daly, after his interview with Ada, mounted his horse and rode away, hoping to tranquillise the conflicting emotions which agitated his mind, naturally enough in his present mood, he took the road least likely to bring him into a crowd, or to draw observation upon his looks or movements, and that brought him up the hill which overlooked the valley, at whose summit peeped forth the modest roof of Abiatha Broad's house.

Brown Bess had obeyed her rider's feverish haste thus far, but she had slackened her pace as she mounted the hill, and, since he did not urge farther speed, she went on at a walk along the level plain above. Mark was lost in a deep reverie, his head drooping, his fingers closing listlessly upon the rein. He would not have seen or known that the Quaker was standing by the gate, had he not spoken suddenly.

"Young man, is thy name Daly—Mark Daly?"

Brown Bess shied, and Mark raised his head hastily.

"That is my name, sir."

"Then I have a word for thine ear," said Abiatha, taking out a letter from his pocket, and glancing over it. "There is a certain kinswoman of mine who is coming to-night to visit me. She would fain have speech with thee—her name is Ruth Weston."

Mark gave a joyful cry.

"Ruth Weston! she is alive, dear, dear Ruth; why has she not answered my advertisement. Oh, sir, I cannot tell you how glad it will make me to see Ruth Weston again."

The Quaker's mild eye shone; a bland smile was on his lips.

"She is a mysterious woman, has strange ways, and yet I am sure that her heart is honest and true. She bids me find thee and appoint a meeting

with thee to-night, and she charges thee, by all thou holdest sacred, to mention the matter to none around thee."

"That is strange, very strange, and unlike Ruth. Once she was not ashamed of caring for a poor, friendless boy," said Mark, meditatively.

"Thou had'st best suspend thy judgment until thou hast talked with Ruth. Name the hour, and place, and I will give her the word the moment she comes."

"I should be glad to see her at Ashton Villa, but if, as you seem to imply, her visit must be secret, it will be useless to make such an appointment."

"Thou wouldst be welcome to my house, but two villains keep close watch at night, and it might lead to unpleasant consequences for thy friend and kinswoman. Perhaps it would be as well to walk on the road below, which crosses the turnpike. It is unfrequented, and there are no houses on it. Ruth will meet thee there."

"Will it be safe for her?"

"She shall have my attendance until she meets you. Afterwards you can go to her own house, in a neighbouring town. Say at nine, this evening, on that road."

"Thank you. Then the question is settled. It is such a relief to know she is alive."

And Mark rode on, his melancholy thoughts if not dispersed, still very much brightened by the pleasant prospect of a meeting with his childhood's friend.

Mr. Ashton was in the library when he returned. Mark was struck by the weariness of his look, and its unnatural pallor. He perceived, too, that there was less clearness of attention when they sat down to work. An accusing thought stabbed the generous secretary with a sharp pang.

Had Mr. Ashton been over to Donnithorne Hall, and received a cool, or unkind reception from his fair betrothed?

It was cruel that a man who gave himself so unselfishly to the help and care of all his fellow creatures should lack the dearest comfort and support of his home life. Mark, for the moment, was almost

resolved to make himself positively odious to Miss Donnithorne, he somehow felt so like a culprit, remembering her looks and words, at their last interview, that day, and sitting there before Morley Ashton's grave, weary face.

"If you please, sir," he ventured, when he saw his patron pushing his hair away from his forehead, and pressing his hand upon it, as if to brush away the pain, "I think I understand your wishes with regard to these letters. I can go through them alone. I think your head aches. Don't stay in this close room."

Morley Ashton threw down the papers with a heavy sigh.

"Yes, my head aches. I am a little worn out, I believe. Perhaps you had better attend to them at once, but I will look them over first."

He took up the pile of letters, and examined the address of each with attention. Where he was uncertain of the source, he broke open the envelope, glanced at the signature, and threw it down upon the pile already examined.

He came to one presently which he did not add to those to be submitted to his secretary.

It contained but a few lines, but they contained a deep significance.

"If you think when you have paid Mr. A. Frost the five hundred pounds you have escaped the danger you dread, Mr. Morley Ashton, you have reckoned without counting upon—"

RUTH WESTON.

Morley Ashton's unnerved fingers dropped the paper, but he caught it up, crumpled it in his hand, and thrust it hastily into his pocket.

Mark was writing, and though he noticed the incident, he did not look up, until a long-drawn sigh from Mr. Ashton appealed to his sympathy.

"Can I do anything for you, sir?" he asked, all the tender reverence of his deep friendship shining in his eyes.

"Yes," exclaimed the other, with a thrill of passion in the tone, "find me Ruth Weston, Mark, my boy. Find that woman and bring her to me."

Mark coloured crimson. He dared not say all he thought, but he answered eagerly:

"Indeed, sir, if I am able I will do it. I have strong hopes of finding her very soon. I know she is alive."

"You have gained a clue?" demanded he, springing to his feet, the colour rushing into his face, his eyes sparkling.

"I cannot explain now—to-morrow, perhaps, I may tell you all," he stammered. "Indeed, sir, you may trust me to do my best."

"I know I can, Mark, my boy, there is something inexpressibly comforting to me in your faithfulness. I cannot help seeing your devotion to my interest, your attachment to me, personally, and while it humiliates me to know myself unworthy of such ardent enthusiasm, I am cheered and comforted by it. Trust you, my lad—of course, I can trust you. I would not fear to risk with you something more precious than my business or my money, my honour itself, Mark."

Poor Mark thought of Ada Donuthorne and felt another throb of self-reproach.

"I will find her for you, sir," he cried, in all the fervour of this inward accusation. "I will certainly find Ruth Weston; and if there be anything she can do for you, if she has any regard for me she will do it."

"Will she listen to you?" he asked, with feverish impatience. "Mark, Mark, my boy, there is a sword hanging over my head. I want it removed—or, I want it to fall! This suspense is killing me."

There came a look of anguish across his countenance, which well might frighten Mark. He sprang up, poured out a glass of water, and brought it hastily.

Mr. Ashton drank it, sighed again, and made one of those hasty passes across his forehead, with the shapely white hand, on which glimmered the diamond with its marvellous flaw, which Mark had learned to interpret as the sign of mental anguish.

At that very moment a servant came to the door. A deputation of gentlemen had arrived to consult him about a new movement in the campaign.

Mark could only marvel and admire the self-control, which swept aside whatever weakening emotion had overpowered him.

Morley Ashton started up from his seat, gave his energetic commands for the reception of the deputation, and went out to meet them, the same bland, courteous, and sedate gentleman, whom all the county admired and revered.

His secretary returned to the letter, with blending images passing through his mind, sorely confusing his ideas, and perplexing his judgment.

And yet so chivalrous and delicate was his devotion to Morley Ashton, that he would not allow himself to go back to that strange confession, and seek to fathom its meaning.

"When he chooses to confide his secret to me, I will hear it," said Mark, "but I will not pry into it."

CHAPTER XXII.

A SUMMONS from Lady Constance intercepted Morley Ashton, as he was returning to the library after the political deputation had taken leave.

He went up to the boudoir, and was met by her tender, maternal smile, and outstretched hand.

"Morley, I want to know when this whirlpool is to subside. You are wearing yourself to a shadow. I could not help noticing, as you passed out, how thin and pale you had grown."

He kissed her twice, with a gentle smile on his face, and seemed to think no other answer necessary; but she held him fast, and persisted.

"Really, Morley, you must not put me off in this fashion. It is a serious thing; you are certainly neglecting your first duty, that of preserving your health. Think what it will be to be taken away from the whole of your usefulness, therefore be prudent and economical of your strength."

"And who says I am not, mother dear? You are over-solicitous. I should take care of myself for your sake, if for no other reason."

"Then you will take rest. Don't let them drag you away to any more of these political meetings. Stay at home, and have a little recreation."

"Well, if I can I will promise to do so. I am a little weary, certainly."

"How can you help it, riding from town to town, speaking out in the open air, night after night? Morley, dear, I don't think you have even rode with Ada more than once."

"Poor little Ada! it is true. But she has had plenty of other attendance—I looked out for that. She blossoms every day into more perfect beauty. I was glad that my secretary can give her the bright happy company she needs. I am too harassed and perplexed with knotty questions to be a decent companion for anyone, much less for one so gay as Ada."

Lady Constance was looking anxiously into his face. Twice her lips moved in answer to an inward prompting, but a second thought checked her.

"But you, mother, are certainly improving," he said, stroking the smooth bands of hair across her forehead. "I have not seen you so bright and fresh-looking for a long time."

"Yes, it is all my dear Miss Darke's magic. I have secured a perfect jewel."

"I am very glad if you are able to obtain brightness out of Darke. That is an odd name. I suppose you refer to the new companion you were telling me about."

"You haven't seen her—but you must. You must come and be soothed and calmed as I am, by her exquisite reading. And her voice is the most lovely one I ever heard. I want you to see her, Morley, because it is possible I shall appeal to you to help me protect her from her enemies. The dear child has confided her history to me."

He listened listlessly. Already his thoughts were stealing off to this sorrowful problem which was so vitally interesting to him, and so perplexing to solve. Where was Ruth Weston? Why was she hiding herself from him, and yet tormenting him with the continual reminder of her existence? And what should be done with Frost, who was waiting for his five hundred pounds?

Lady Constance detected the wandering of his thoughts. She touched the forehead of her son, and when the maid came she whispered a slight command.

Straightway the door beyond unclosed, and a tall, straight figure, clad in sober gray, with a book clasped in her fair hands, came gliding in.

"You are to read to me, Mabel, some of that pleasant poem, and chase off the odious which this odious political campaign has hung over my son's brain. This is Miss Darke, Morley. Mr. Ashton, Ma—"

Morley rose with that ready politeness of his, but his face suddenly blanched.

"Ah! I am so rejoiced to meet you again—and here I count this an unexpected good fortune, Miss Darke."

Mabel's face was likewise glowing.

"Mr. Ashton—it is strange that I never suspected it was you."

"Well, whatever is the explanation of this?" cried Lady Constance. "How could you have made acquaintance before?"

Morley explained, and sat down again with a face effectively freed from listlessness.

"You were going to read to us. That will be a refreshing treat for me."

And Mabel, not without a little nervousness, commenced the poem. She was soon, however, so inspired by its fire and pathos, that she almost forgot her listeners, except that she was aware they were glowing and melting in kindred sympathy.

When it was concluded, Lady Constance turned triumphantly for her son's approval.

He did not speak it, but she saw the moisture in his eye, the softened tenderness of his face, and knew all it meant, when he simply said:

"I thank you, Miss Darke."

He added presently, with one of his grave smiles:

"If I had only been aware my unknown friend was so near me, Miss Darke, I should have called for you to accompany me, when I went to skew the graves of those poor innocents with flowers."

"Ah! you have done it. It is odd that the wish has been haunting me ever since."

"I meant to carry another basket to-day," he said, eagerly.

"Why not go now?" suggested Lady Constance, who was glad to urge any pretext to induce her son to take recreation. "I can spare Mabel, and the walk will do her good. If you see anything of Ada, take her with you. She has not seen Miss Darke yet."

And so the pair were presently strolling across the valley towards the churchyard. Morley did not yet understand why the young woman had need of the precaution, and kept the thick veil so closely over her face, and he was rather annoyed by it. But when they had reached the peaceful silence of the graveyard, and stood beside the three little mounds of fresh earth, she put back her veil, and the deep, soulful eyes answered back his thoughtful glance.

"Innocent little creatures!" she murmured, "why do we think their fate sorrowful?"

"Indeed," he returned, softly, "it would be well for many of the best of us could we change places with them."

He gave her the basket of flowers, which he had obtained from the gardener, and Mabel scattered them with tender care along the newly turned turf.

She looked up, to find him gazing straight into her face, with a peculiarly intense and rapt expression, beneath which she coloured, and cast down her eyes.

"I beg your pardon," he said, quickly. "I did not mean to be rude; I was simply wondering what there was about you which gave me such a restful feeling of sustaining strength. It is not what we usually

look for in your sex, but somehow I think a man could come to you in his weakness, and be helped to grow strong—could show you his besieging foes, and have guidance to do battle valiantly."

Mabel stooped down to re-arrange a cluster of lilies. She took up one stalk of milky white blossoms, and crossed it with a sprig of heliotrope.

"Ah!" sighed he, "it is only the lilies are perfectly spotless."

"Death perhaps purifies the most earth-stained," answered she, catching his thought. "It is not expected that mortality can be perfect."

"You know it then—you do not condemn, even if you find a man—like this?" he asked, with a certain feverish interest she could not help perceiving.

And he held up his hand and showed the ring, and the flaw in the diamond.

She looked up, with fearless, earnest eyes.

"What is diamond? Is diamond, sir, and for the seen, the disfiguring mark, if I could not have the gem without it, I would certainly do my best to remedy it, and if I could not, I should make the best of it."

He was silent a long time, until she began to think he had forgotten her presence, but suddenly she saw him start, and look over the wall. A shadow had fallen across the path.

Mabel smothered a cry of alarm when she followed his glance, and saw the figure of a man leaning there by the gateway.

She dropped her veil hastily, as she caught a glimpse of the second figure, and whispered tremulously:

"Oh, sir, let me return to your mother. I would not have that man recognize me. He is a spy, he is my deadliest enemy."

Mr. Ashton was himself startled and uneasy. He did not express the surprise he felt at her recognition of the disreputable stranger, but he drew her hand through his arm, and led her down the path.

Mr. A. Frost and companion came sound at once to intercept them at the gateway. Morley felt her hand tremble on his arm. He stopped, and said, in that grave, decided way of his:

"Miss Darke, you will be good enough to go down to the corner, and wait. The men wish to speak with me. Be assured, whoever they are, they shall not molest you while I am here to protect you."

Mabel silently dropped her hold of his arm, and retreated in the direction he had pointed out. She took care to adopt Abiatha's suggestion, and put a little stoop into the erect gracefulness of her figure. She took a station where, if need be, she would be in a situation to fly, or to render what assistance was in her power, if Mr. Ashton needed it. And through her thick veil she watched closely all that took place at the gateway.

Morley Ashton went forward fearlessly, a little haughtily, it seemed to her.

She saw him fling up one shapely, patrician hand with a quick gesture. She was able to make out the savage frown on the face beyond, that face which held such cruel malignity that it could not be disguised to her eyes by any changes. She heard the voice, which had one odious ring for her ears, in whatever tone it might be pitched, speak quickly and angrily, and Morley Ashton's cold, clear, and cutting reply promptly. The words however were lost to her. Then Morley Ashton drew a paper from his pocket and handed it for the other's inspection, and the fierce oath and invective which followed shaped themselves into words, because so often heard, alas! and remembered still with such a thrill of horror. She shut her eyes after that, and knew no more, until Mr. Ashton came back for her.

The two men were walking slowly away.

"Come," said Morley Ashton.

She looked into his face, and could not help shuddering at its haggard sternness.

"Sir," said she, "do not trust yourself with those men. There is no villainy too low for them, no reckless deed too daring for their attempt."

He gave a low and bitter groan.

"My friend," said he, "if you found yourself between Scylla and Charybdis, and a Niagara below, what could you do but let the waves whirl you on?"

"I would fight while I had any strength to win the one safe track left me," she answered.

"But if you were not a woman, with a woman's pure, angelic nature, but a man—whose heart is filled with proud ambitions, tyrannical pride, a hundred evil, tempting impulses—and this poor tool was offered to save you an hour, a day maybe, from being swallowed up by the vortex, would you disdain to use it, knowing its villainy?"

Mabel could not tell what to answer. She only dimly guessed at his meaning. She looked at him wistfully, and answered:

"I think we have all within our own breasts the best guide. Conscience can tell us what is right, and what is wrong."

"Aye," he muttered, "but a weak will will hide from conscience; a cowardly heart will cheat it."

"That is not yours, Mr. Ashton," she returned, gently. "As short a time as I have been in Chardon Valley I have learned that you are the one man who gives himself bravely to whatever duty comes to hand."

He sighed bitterly.

"But you are impatient to reach home. You are frightened by those men. I do not think they had any knowledge of your identity. They came to find me."

Nothing farther was said until they reached the house. Then, with the graceful ease of his accustomed manner, Mr. Ashton said:

"I shall come to my mother's boudoir often, to share her enjoyment of your reading, Miss Danks. I hope you will not forbid me."

"I shall be honoured by such attention as you gave to-day," she returned, and went up at once to Lady Constance.

He stood a moment irresolute, then went back down the avenue, and took the path leading across to Donnithorne Hall.

Lady Constance was eager to hear her protégé's opinion of her idolised son, but Mabel's quietness rather disappointed her.

"Why did not Morley come up with you?" she asked, anxiously. "No new deputation has got hold of him, I trust?"

"I think he has gone over to Donnithorne Hall, your ladyship," answered Mabel, from the window, where she could see him just crossing by the private gate.

"That is well," replied Lady Constance, with a well-satisfied expression of countenance. "He has had no time lately, even for his visits there. Oh, by the way, Mabel, I have been thinking of a charming little sketch in one of Morley's books, which you must read to me. He carried the volume to his room. It is bound in green morocco, you will know it at once. I wonder if you couldn't go to his room and get it. He is particular about that closet of books, so I shouldn't care to send the valet; but he wouldn't mind your going, I know. It is the right hand door on the corridor, and the closet is at the left. I believe I am getting whimsical, but it really seems as if I must hear it read this afternoon."

"I will go, certainly," returned Mabel, and not without a certain undefined curiosity, she proceeded upon the errand. The valet was not there, only the chambermaid was in the corridor, and she pointed out the door leading to Mr. Ashton's private suite of rooms, which were of the quiet elegance she had anticipated. There was no trouble in finding the closet. The shelves were all packed with books, and peculiar-looking volumes they were. There was a familiar look about them which caused Mabel to stop and read the titles, after the green morocco volume had been discovered. Her astonishment was unbounded when she found that nearly all were treatises of some sort upon Russia, or Russian affairs. She could not help stopping to ask what it meant, when she found one of her old questions answered. Abilasha Brodski's first volumes were all here.

"It is very strange," she murmured, and then went back to the day of the explosion, and the fact that they were both there at the old antiquarian book-stall acquired fresh significance.

Lady Constance thought her unusually quiet and abstracted the rest of the day. If she could only have followed the strange, perplexed tangle of the girl's thoughts, her ladyship would have been as much alarmed as indignant. Happily for us all, the mind is a kingdom in which we all have our thrones, and no usurper can look in upon its busy realm.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MARK DALY took the way down to the cross road with all possible speed, for Mr. Ashton had detained him until late in the evening, looking over an unusual amount of correspondence. The gentleman was restless and nervous, and Mark fancied, deeply depressed also; so that working seemed the most acceptable method of passing the time, and taking up his thoughts. The young secretary did not like to make known his wish for release, notwithstanding his thoughts kept wandering impatiently to the appointed rendezvous; but when his patron left him, he lost no time in hastening to fulfil his promise.

He had been trembling all the way, lest this woman, whom he so ardently desired to find, should have become discouraged in waiting, and he had decided to proceed promptly to the Quaker's house in search of her, if such should be the case.

It was a great relief then when he saw a woman's figure rise up from behind a clump of bushes, and come forward, as his hurrying step came echoing down the road.

She waited for him to speak:

"Ruth—Ruth Weston!" exclaimed Mark, in a low and tremulous tone.

"Mark, Mark! is it you?" asked the mysterious woman, in a still more agitated voice, stretching out her hands to him.

He grasped them eagerly, and tried to see her face in the dimness of the evening light.

"Oh! Ruth—Ruth! why have you hidden away from me? If you had only seen how down-hearted I was to find no trace of you—you, the only friend I had then in England—if you had seen me when I first arrived, you would have come to me, I am sure."

"Poor boy! indeed I should. But I knew nothing of it. I have only known about your advertisement a little while, and I took means to see you, the moment I believed it safe to do so."

"Safe!" repeated Mark. "Dear Ruth, I don't in the least understand all this mystery. Why could you not come to see me at Ashton Villa, or let me come to you wherever you make your home?"

"At Ashton Villa!" repeated Ruth Weston, in a voice of horror. "Oh! Mark Daly! no one at Ashton Villa must know that you have seen me at all."

He was silent for a moment, alike with disappointment, and the chill of the most vague but alarming suspicions.

"My lad," said the woman, eagerly, "have they stolen your heart away from me? Are you also under the uncanny influence of that man's spell? Mark, Mark, what strange accident brought you to Chardon Valley, and to this man, Morley Ashton, of all others?"

"Why do you speak in that tone?" returned Mark, hastily. "Mr. Ashton is one of the noblest men I ever saw. He has been the best friend I ever knew." She laughed scornfully and bitterly.

"The best friend you ever knew! Oh, foolish foolish boy."

"I beg your pardon, Ruth; not the best friend, for it was you who took me from a more sorrowful need, and supported me out of your hard-earned savings. I do not forget it. I have never for a moment forgotten it. I have pleased myself for those last past years, in all my visions of future success, picturing the pleasant home I would make for you."

"Oh, Mark Daly," sobbed the woman, "I have worked, planned, skulked, and plotted all these years also—and for you—only for you!"

"I have the package here at my new home—the package locked in my trunk, that I brought from India for you," pursued Mark, eagerly. "Come to-morrow and get it; come and see also how kindly and generously I am treated there, and no longer use that angry and slighting tone when you speak of my benefactor—my noble, generous friend, Morley Ashton."

Her voice was deep and hoarse with passion as she replied:

"Mark Daly, do you believe I would deceive you? Have you become so fascinated with that man's arts that you trust him, before you will believe me? I tell you Morley Ashton is not your friend. He is your bitterest, deadliest foe!"

"Ruth, Ruth," exclaimed Mark, passionately, in a voice of keen pain, "you are stabbing me to the heart when you tell me that. There is some mistake. I know there is some mistake. If ever there were truth and sincerity on a man's face, it is on his. The whole county, the country itself, does him honour, and gives him reverence."

"Yes, I know that. I know how he has risen to a high place, where men gaze and admire, and do him homage. I know thousands listen to his voice, as to an oracle—that they would laugh to scorn the poor, weak accents of an humble woman like me, and yet I declare—and you, Mark Daly, dare not refuse to believe me—I declare that Morley Ashton has been guilty of a foul deed, a grievous wrong, and that he is your enemy."

The solemn pathos underlying the sternness of her tone sent cold shivers through Mark's veins, and brought hot tears into his eyes.

"Ruth Weston, oh, Ruth Weston, if you know how you are hurting me," he murmured, and then he added, wistfully. "I wish I could see your face."

She drew a small lantern from under her shawl, slipped up the slide, and held it up.

"Look, my poor boy," she said, "you will see a face worn and seamed by care even more than by time."

The warm glow of light shone brightly over a grave countenance, with soft, gray eyes, just now full of melancholy and wistfulness. The head was wrapped in some sort of woollen scarf, wound carelessly about it, but it left free the broad forehead and the smooth bands of hair, still dark, but streaked with silver. The lips were thin and pale, but in rest wore a peaceful look which belied the sadness of the eyes.

"The same Ruth Weston! You are not so changed as I feared," said Mark, catching his breath. "Ruth

Weston, who was a tender mother, and a generous benefactress to a poor boy, left in a hard and pitiless home. Oh, Ruth, love me still, and be good to me!"

"I must speak the truth, Mark," she answered, firmly, "and I must right the wrong to which I have devoted myself, my strength, and my life."

"There is a mistake," he repeated, confidently.

"Ruth, Mr. Ashton is very anxious to find you. Come with me and see him, and let us have thorough explanations. I am sure if there be any wrong on his side, it is innocently done. I am persuaded that he will gladly remedy it. I suppose I have a dim idea of your meaning. I knew that he was the owner of Holly Bank."

"You knew it, and you stayed with him still. Mark, Mark, you had more spirit when you were but a child. What has changed you so?"

"My strong affection for him," answered Mark; "it is indeed a strange thing to me how I reverence and love him so—how I have loved him from the first; so that I am willing that he should trample, even on my dearest hopes, if it will spare him grief or loss."

"This is perversity—folly!" exclaimed Ruth Weston, impatiently.

"It is certainly truth; sometimes it almost seems like an instinct implanted with my birth. Oh, Ruth, there is almost the same feeling as when I look at the picture you gave me—at the miniature of my hapless and unfortunate mother!"

"Do not name her in the same breath with this man," retorted Ruth Weston, with blither emphasis. "Mark, Mark, I never expected to find you so backward and dilatory in this matter; I, who have worked so long and patiently to clear your mother's good name, to right you—imagine what it must be for me to find you so reluctant to give me assistance, so infatuated with one who has wrought you such harm."

"What harm, Ruth?" asked Mark. "do not let me be guessing blindly any longer. What harm has Morley Ashton done, and have you the righteous proofs to offer in the face of any such daring accusation?"

"Aye, I have proofs, all needed proofs but one, the last and the best, and I want your help to obtain that. He has searched for it, and so have I, all these dreary months that have now now into years. But I am sure that he has his hand upon it now, for what else was he to pay those low villains their exorbitant price? I want you to watch him, Mark, and if he brings a book, an old, old volume—stay, give me attention and listen to its name. 'The March of the French into Russia,' that is it, and it is the second volume, and it will be covered with an old, dingy paper, pasted down upon the covers of the book. Mark, Mark, if you can lay your hands upon that book before Morley Ashton disturbs the covers, do it at any cost, at any price!"

She had spoken rapidly with suppressed vehemence, and caught both his hands in hers as she finished.

"What will it avail if I do find it, Ruth?" asked Mark Daly, in a voice that hardly seemed like his own.

"Do?" she returned, with an hysterical sob, "it will tear the mask from that man's face—it will give you your rights, and the best desires of your heart, whatever they may be."

"You know what are those desires, Ruth. You know how deeply my mother's blighted name has sunk into my heart. Will they give me my hopes there?"

"Aye, there and everywhere."

The young man put up his hands as if his eyes were dazzled by some blinding glare, and Ruth Weston hastily hid her lantern. But it was not the glare of the light there. It was the sudden dazzle of a brilliant vision which rose before his mental vision. An honourable name—a fair patrimony—and Ada Donnithorne! What she had hinted held the promise of all these.

Mark gasped for breath, and then he shuddered.

"Tell me, tell me truly. What has Morley Ashton done?" he asked, hoarsely.

"I am not sure you are fit to be trusted, boy," returned Ruth, reproachfully; "how can I trust you with my secrets, when you are so ready to go over to the enemy with them?"

"I must know—indeed I must know," and Mark's voice was almost fierce, "or I will not move an inch, though the proof you ask for lay within my grasp."

"Foolish boy! Is your friendship for this false man more powerful than your sacred duty to your dead mother?—that mother who, with her dying breath, gave this mission into my charge. Mark, Mark, I should never have believed it of you."

"I am in his house—sating the breast of his bounty, enjoying all the comforts and blessings he bestows with such a generous hand, receiving most of all his gracious friendship, his kindest sympathy; it makes

me feel like a traitor and a serpent to think of such a thing as turning upon him. I must know that he has really forfeited the high opinion I have formed of him.

"The man has a spell. He bewitches everyone. It was that I ran away from. It was for that I have refused to listen to his advertisements," muttered Ruth Weston, rocking herself to and fro drowsily.

"It is the spell of a noble soul, which the dullest may recognise," added Mark.

"This boy is won over to him, and the girl will follow, I read it in her eyes, and there is only my poor wit to thwart and baffle him; only poor Ruth Weston," she croued on, dismally. "To think how long and patiently I waited, until I had melted even Paul Barker's iron heart, and the end might have been accomplished, but for this man—this man whom they all honour, flatter, and love—while they turn away from poor Ruth Weston."

"No, no, Ruth, I love you, I honour you, I am deeply grateful to you. You mis-interpret my meaning. All I ask is that you tell me the whole, and let me use my own judgment."

"Come closer, then, closer, lest even the trees and the stones should have ears, and remember as you deal lightly with the knowledge, so you cast dishonour upon your dead mother's name."

She bent down, and whispered a sentence in his ear.

Mark Daly gave a low, hoarse groan. "It cannot be—Oh, Ruth Weston, he is the soul of honour. He is nice upon punctiliousness concerning the most trifling transaction. There is some horrible mistake. Come with me, and see him. I promised to bring you to him if I could find you. Come with me, Ruth, oh, come with me!"

"Not now. Would you have me ruin all things? Bring me that book before he has tampered with it, and after that, I will confront him as soon as you please. I tell you he is likely to have it soon. Will you watch, will you take notice?"

"I will do the best I can. I am dizzy now, and sick—heart sick. Oh, what a dreary world this is!"

"Poor boy! do you only realise it now? I have known it for many years."

"I must leave Ashton Villa. I will not be a serpent, to partake of his bounty, and turn round to sting him."

"His bounty—and to you!" echoed Ruth scornfully.

"If I could only find out that it was a mistake," sighed Mark.

"You think only of him," exclaimed Ruth, indignantly. "Is it nothing that you learn your right to a name, fortune, and position? Is there no other sweeter hope? I saw you riding with the heiress of Donnington Hall. It seemed to me I read a pretty secret in her eyes, and yours. There is a chance for the realisation of such a dream. Mark Daly, be a man, and you shall see it all realised."

"I must have time to think," said Mark.

"Take as much time as you please, only act also," returned the woman. "I must see you again, but not in Chardon Valley. Mark, you will surely be discreet enough not to reveal it, if I confess my place of retreat. See, here is the key of a house in M—; you will know it by the withered tree in front, and by an arrow traced on the stone post at the gateway; for the rest, it is situated on the main street beyond the fork of the road. There are three keys to the very peculiar lock on the door. I keep one myself; Abiatha Broad, the Quaker, who is a trusty friend, through whom you may any time communicate with me, has the second. To you, Mark, I give the third. Come there when you have anything important to communicate, and if you find the house empty, wait a little while. You will see me soon. I shall send for you through the Quaker, if I myself have any new instructions. Remember that your first duty is that you owe to your mother's memory, and let no false sense of honour drive you from Ashton Villa, until you have first received my consent. Above all remember that it is your highest and most solemn task to help me find that missing book. I must stay no longer. Even now there may be spies upon my track. Good-night, Mark."

"Good night!" returned Mark, and walked back slowly, like one frozen by an inward chill.

Ruth Weston turned also, and hurried down the road, in the opposite direction. She had reached the lane crossing this retired byroad, when a man suddenly leaped out from the hedge beyond, and came hurrying towards her.

Ruth Weston drew out her lantern with a hasty hand, pulled open the lid, and flashed its light into the face of the intruder. She shut it again as hastily, slipped her arm into the ring made for that purpose, and her other hand crept stealthily to a belt beneath her jacket, until it found the handle of a small pistol.

"Ho, ho! at last I have tracked you, have I?"

exclaimed Mr. A. Frost, in a jeering, triumphant tone, "at last, Madame Ruth, I shall have a word with you, and on my own terms."

Ruth Weston had inured herself to many such perilous scenes. She had won by many a hard lesson, what Abiatha Broad had so often declared was possible, something very nearly akin to a man's courage. Her heart gave a convulsive throb, but she pressed her hand more closely to the trusty little defender in her belt and answered, coldly:

"Not yet on your own terms, man. Stand back, or I shall fire!"

Mr. A. Frost retreated a step. There was no mistaking the sharp click of the pistol, nor the stern determination of her voice.

But did she see the figure creeping up behind?

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

THE FRENCH ATLANTIC CABLE.—The first instalment of this cable—one hundred and twenty-five miles in length—which will be stowed in the fore-tank of the *Great Eastern*, has arrived at Sheerness. A sufficient length of the core of the cable (to be used for testing purposes) has been supplied on board, and workmen are busily engaged fixing it ready for connection with the instruments. It is expected that the whole of the work on this side of the channel will be completed by June next, and that the *Great Eastern* will be ready to sail from Sheerness for Brest (the port of departure from the French coast) some time during the same month. It is stated that the command of the *Great Eastern* has been given to Captain Halpin, who was first officer under Captain Sir James Anderson while laying the 1865-66 Anglo-American cable.

THE ORIGIN OF THE METEORS.

The following is the outline of a theory upon the origin of meteors, which shows, clearly and indisputably, the three following astronomical facts, namely:—That the sun's orbit is westward; that the sun has a long meteoric tail streaming many millions of miles behind it; and that the earth actually passes through the tail of the sun on the 14th of every November. In March the north pole of the sun is seen inclining towards the earth. This is known to observers, who see the spots upon the sun's disk describing a curve convex to the south. In June, its north pole is inclined to the left, and the spots are seen moving in straight lines, and inclining upwards. In September the south pole of the sun is inclined towards the earth, and his spots are again seen to curve, but now concave to the south. In December his north pole is inclined to our right, and his spots are again seen to move in straight lines, but now inclining downward.

These facts are well known to all practical astronomers; and many astronomical writers represent the same by diagrams in their text-books; they will not, therefore, be denied or disputed.

It is also well known to all astronomers that there is seen at certain seasons of the year "a faint light, hardly distinguishable from ordinary twilight." Astronomical writers tell us "that it has the form of a pyramid;" of course they mean on both sides of the sun, because they immediately represent it by a diagram on two sides of the sun, and say that "its major axis is at right angles with the axis of the sun." Hence the popular astronomical opinion or belief is, that said light (that is, the "zodiacal light") is on both sides, or rather, that it surrounds the equator of the sun; and while some have supposed it to be a "solar atmosphere," and others a "nebulous vapour," we feel inclined to dispute the point, and say that it is neither.

We hold that "the zodiacal light" is ever only on one side of the sun, and we feel quite prepared to prove the fact by the clearest and most incontestable evidence. Could the zodiacal light be seen evening and morning of the same day, then our astronomy friends would have somewhat to base their opinions upon; but, as the said light can only be seen after sundown at certain seasons of the year, and just before sunrise at certain other seasons, it is clear that the said light is not on two sides of, nor all around the equator of the sun.

This light, then, is a longitudinal appendage, or tail, if you will, resembling the tail of a comet, not nebulous or vapoury, though apparently so, but purely meteoric, and similar to if not identically the same as that of a comet, which is, without doubt, meteoric.

If the zodiacal light surrounded the equator of the sun, it could be seen, less or more, almost every morning and evening of the year; but it is not, nor can it so be seen. It is seen only in the months of April and May after sunset, and in October and November before sunrise. Consequently, it is only on

one side of the sun, and that, too, on his hinder side, if the expression may be allowed.

The length of the zodiacal light, as given by astronomers, is from 40 to 90 degrees, and estimating the length of this light in miles, we find, by comparing it with the solar distance of Venus, that it cannot be much less than 130,000,000 miles. Its length is no doubt always about the same, but owing to the change of position of the earth, as it moves in its orbit around the sun, the zodiacal light apparently changes its position, appearing shorter or longer accordingly. Supposing 90 deg., then, to be the length of this solar tail, and about 46 deg. the astronomical distance of Venus from the sun; if 46 degrees gives 68,000,000 miles (which is Venus' distance from the sun), then 95,000,000 (i.e., the distance of the earth), will represent the earth when seen from any planet at right angles with the sun and earth, at about 63 deg., leaving a balance in favour of the length of the sun's tail of no less than 27 deg., or about 37,000,000 miles, at the lowest calculation.

Supposing the above to be positively true, it seems clear that the earth in moving around the sun must some time or other either pass through or by this tail; and meteorites from it (for it is a composite of nothing else, if the fumaric cinders and crateric vomitings constantly and continuously thrown out by the ever-flaming sun are to be recognised as such) must fall upon the earth in great abundance at that particular point of her orbit; and the earth comes to that particular point on the 14th of November.

A RULE FOR FINDING THE EXACT LENGTH OF THE CIRCUMFERENCE OF ANY CIRCLE.

Multiply the difference of the diameter and diagonal of a square of any dimensions by ten, and from the product subtract the diameter; the remainder is the length of the circumference of the largest circle which can be inscribed within the square.

How to construct a useful measure.—The rule being very brief is easily remembered and applied.

On a planed board draw a square six inches in diameter and through its centre a diagonal line from corner to corner. Extend one side of the square in a straight line indefinitely, or about twenty inches. With dividers or compasses take the diameter and set it on the diagonal at one end, marking the distance. Now take the remainder of the diagonal line with the dividers, and walk them on the extended straight line, including the diameter of the square, ten steps. The distance outside the square is the length of the circumference of a circle of the diameter of six inches.

To apply this measure to circumferences of greater diameter, multiply it by the number of times six inches are contained in such diameter; if the given diameter is less, divide the measure accordingly.

Having deduced this rule from the principle demonstrated in the book published by me some months ago, I am willing that others enjoy its utility, without paying the expense of a patented instrument, since every mechanic can make his own and can easily test its accuracy by trial.

CYRUS P. GROSVENOR.

At the Star Hotel, Lewes, there is a staircase brought from Slangham-place of oak, but as black as ebony.

A SUBSTANCE of a rather fine flavour and beautiful appearance is finding a ready sale as honey just now in Germany. This substitute for the genuine product of the bee-hive is simply starch converted into sugar by means of sulphuric acid.

FARTHING STAMPS.—In a letter pleading for stamps at lower prices than a penny, the writer says: "In France and Italy there are stamps for one centime each (the tenth part of a penny). In Spain quarto stamps (one farthing). In Greece and the Ionian Islands they have stamps for one lepta (the hundredth part of ninepence, English). In Constantinople, Wallachia, Roumelia, Thessaly, Servia, over all the Turkish Empire, there are stamps as low as one para each (the twentieth part of a penny). In Germany, Prussia, Belgium, in the Austrian and Russian empires, they have stamps at very small prices."

FEMALE LONGEVITY.—It is said that while only soldier of the United States' War of Independence is still living and drawing a pension—he voted the other day, we believe, for General Grant, and had voted for every President from Washington to Grant, both inclusive—there are, according to the Secretary of the Interior, 888 widows of revolutionary soldiers still living, and on the rolls of the pension list. Of course, as a rule, the women might be a trifle younger than their husbands, but this seems a great disproportion. After all, "wearing out" seems to be a quicker process than "rusting out."



[WOMAN OR GHOST.]

THE PHANTOM OF MARION.

CHAPTER III.

The minutes dragged slowly along to those who with minds strangely excited, and interest roused to intensity, were watching the black towers that rose grimly towards the sky, and waiting the appearance of a spirit. The solemn stillness that reigned over nature impressed Lady Alice with a vague dread, which, combined with her feverish expectancy, quite unnerved her, and she trembled, tried to control herself, but failed.

"One minute more," remarked Colonel De Fontaine, and his voice seemed harsh and unnatural.

Suddenly a shadow fell upon the silver streams of light that bathed the battlements of Rutherford Castle; a white figure came slowly into view, and gradually rose until it attained the form and attitude of a woman, though it seemed transparent and visionary, and capable of being dispelled by the slightest zephyr.

Lady Alice clung close to her companion, and with feelings of awe gazed upon the snowy apparition, she moved not, but seemed charmed.

An instant more and a light flashed, and grew into a flame, revealing long tresses of raven hair falling over shoulders whiter than the purest of marble, while the face seemed cut in stone, and as implacable.

"Get me a glass, my good man," said the soldier, very coolly.

Ere he hastened away to execute the order, and was returning with the desired article, when Lord Beauford dashed past him, and ran forward to the spot where Lady Alice and her companion were standing.

As the gaze of his lordship rested upon the spectre, which seemed to have grown ghastly and more filmy, his face turned pale, and with distended eyes he, too, looked bewilderingly, doubtfully, yet tremblingly upon it.

At that moment the old man returned, and was in the act of passing the glass to the colonel, when Lord Beauford snatched it from his hand, brought it to a focus, and with evident agitation, peered through it at the phantom beyond.

For an instant he gazed, then the glass fell from his hand; he staggered, and cried, in a voice of apprehension and amazement:

"Great heaven! 'Tis the face and figure of Lady Anne Rutherford!"

"Papa! Oh, papa, are you ill?" exclaimed Lady Alice, deserting her companion, and running towards her father.

"No, no, my child," he hastily responded, recovering in a measure his self-possession. "Lady Anne was a dear friend of mine, and the similarity startled me, that is all."

"It is no more," mused the officer; "it has vanished."

And with many conflicting thoughts and conjectures with regard to that which he had witnessed and heard, he offered his arm to Lady Alice, and without speaking, passed into the castle.

Lord Beauford showed no disposition to converse, and Lady Alice having retired, the colonel ordered his valet to his room, and shortly after bade the lord good-night.

Upon entering his chamber, he found the valet standing in the middle of the room, his hands buried in his pockets, his features twisted into a ludicrous expression of fear, and his eyes glancing timorously around.

The colonel halted, surveyed the perturbed man with a comical expression upon his intellectual countenance, and queried:

"Why, Franco, what possesses you? You appear terribly frightened."

The valet thus addressed, came timidly forward, glancing uneasily behind him at each step, as though some phantom were about to grasp him with its bony fingers, and drawing very near to his master, said in hesitating whispers:

"They do really say, sir, that this room is haunted!"

"Haunted?" repeated the colonel, derisively.

"The deuce it is. I should think England was one regenerating nest of phantoms and goblins, by the stories and optical illusions that are floating upon the air. Don't be a simpleton, Franco, but attend to your duties."

"Ugh-ur-ur-ur, what's that?" ejaculated the servant, dropping a garment from his shaking fingers, and gazing apprehensively around.

"Nothing; but the curtain loosed by the wind."

answered the soldier, indifferently. "Bring my portmanteau, and stop this nonsense."

"I will, yo-o-o, I-will," answered Franco; but ere he had crossed the room, his knees shook beneath him, and turning, he ran back, exclaiming in broken accents,—"Master, th—there, se—see. Oh dear, the go-go-ghost!"

"You act like a lunatic," exclaimed the colonel, impatiently. "Where is the ghost? I desire some one to smoke with; show him to me."

"There—a—over in the c—corner!" ejaculated Franco, getting behind his master, bent up double with affright.

"Come with me," replied the colonel, taking him by the hand; "we will examine it."

"No,—no—o—o, do—n't," implored the valet, with a pallid face, and pressing his hand. "There's a dear, good master, pl—please do—don't."

"The fellow is thoroughly frightened," mused the officer, and added aloud, "I'll go and bring it to you."

"Mur—murder," gasped the superstitious servant. "I wish—I was in Fra—France—this is a hor—rid place."

Then, as he saw his master returning with a white object before him, the valet fell upon the floor, pressed his hands upon his stomach, and while he rocked to and fro with terror, delivered himself of the following, in spasmodic utterances:

"Oh, I shall die—I wish Eng—England was burnt up. Why didn't Noah carry it off in the ark,—ugh—eh—Oh, what's that?"

"Get up here and see," answered his master, while a broad smile played upon his features; "it won't hurt you, I promise."

"Wo—won't it?" stammered Franco. "Is it cold? Oh dear, mas—ter! wha—what is it?"

The colonel grasped him by the shoulder, stood him upon his feet, and then introduced him to the ghost.

Franco gazed at his master with an expression of serio-comic shame, and then, throwing back his head, screwed up one eye, ran his hands into the bottom of his pockets, put out one foot, and, looking abashed and extremely foolish, said:

"By the saints, master, but this is your—your night-dress!"

"Of course it is, you ninny," laughed the colonel.

"You hung it upon the nail, and five minutes after thought it was a ghost."

"S—o I d—i—d!" said Franco, gazing ruefully at the door, and twirling his thumbs.

"Are you cured of your fantasy?" asked the colonel, with a glance of playful indignation. "If you are, bring me my portmanteau."

As the servant reached the other side of the room, his imagination and the stories he had heard again overcame him, and, grasping the desired article, he reached his master's side as quickly as possible, and said:

"Excuse me, Colonel, I'm pretty near cured, I hope; but they do say that you have seen a ghost this very night."

"Ah," he muttered, "so the fellow has got hold of that. In that case, I cannot reason it out of him." Then he added aloud: "You may go; you annoy me very much by your foolishness."

"Ah, eh, thank you, sir!"

And Franco rushed out of the room.

"As brave a fellow as ever lived, when he has natural enemies to deal with, but he has a supreme horror of the supernatural," laughed the young officer, as he prepared to retire.

Reclining upon his couch, the soldier soliloquized: "So this room has also the reputation of being haunted. Well, I have met live men upon the field of battle, and I must in truth be a coward if I now fear dead ones. I laughed at poor, deluded Franco, yet what I have seen to-night is no subject to jest about. I quoted optical illusions to ease his mind, yet I was full awake, cool, and in possession of my senses when that clear, white figure rose slowly to the turret. I am no believer in ghosts, yet I cannot explain this. I wonder why Lord Beauford was so agitated, and again, why, during the evening, Lady Beauford fainted at beholding this wear upon my wrist—no, not scar, but a mark; it has been there since my earliest remembrance."

He paused, thought a few moments, and then resumed:

"There is a mystery there, and I am prone to believe—though I know not why—that I am remotely connected with it." An expression of pain passed over his face, and he continued in bitter accents—"And who am I? A wretch, a foundling, a—nobody—alone upon this wide earth, with none whom I can call my own; even denied that blessed boon of knowing my parents, and not even permitted to know who they were, or what they were, and only aware that in my infancy I lived with an old woman who treated me kindly, and called me her child, but that she told me, and forcibly, that I was not her son; that when I arrived at my thirteenth year, she died, and her remains—the only one who had ever been taken a friendly interest in me—were consigned to the cold ground, and I, a mere untutored child, was left to battle alone with the world, thrown upon the restless waves of life with no hand to guide me, no kind word to cheer me, no sweet voice to counsel me—to sink or survive as my Creator might determine." Again he paused, and then continued, sadly:

"I have lived thus far, and am now in a position where I am independent, yet I am not happy. That aching void in my heart cries out to be filled, and each time with increasing force and grief. Oh, you who have parents, be glad, be thankful, appreciate them, reverse them, for you never can have the most remote idea of the torture of mind, the agony of heart, the utter loneliness and desolation which permeates my very being—I, who have never heard the dulcet tones of a mother's voice, or seen a father's face. But I will not repine; the Creator who placed me in this world, will guide me safely through it, do I but trust him." And with this beautiful and devout closing of his soliloquy, Colonel Le Fontaine closed his eyes and was soon in a peaceful slumber.

Two hours had passed, when the young officer started convulsively from his sleep, and gazed towards the window, through which the mellow rays of the orb of night entered, flooding the apartment in virgin light. Directly before him, and intercepting the moonbeams, arose a figure, white and ghastly; for a moment it remained stationary, then described a circle, and with a gliding motion approached the bed.

Colonel Le Fontaine moved not, but determined to satisfy himself with regard to this visitor by gazing upon its features. Accordingly he remained perfectly still and waited for the spectre to advance.

In a moment the phantom approached the bed, and for a minute remained motionless beside it, then, slowly bending over, she drew the clothes down from the soldier's neck, which exposed to view a mark similar to the one on his wrist. Apparently satisfied with her scrutiny, she replaced the coverlet—though in doing so the colonel noticed that the hands trembled, and that there were rings upon the fingers, which ghosts do not usually wear—then moved slowly backward from the bed, described a second circle, wavered an instant, and then disappeared from view.

The young officer leaped from his couch, lighted a lamp, and diligently searched the apartment for some outlet beside the door, but his examination proved fruitless; nothing was seen; no one was in the room with him; the walls appeared perfectly solid, and he could not obtain the slightest clue to the mystery, which, as it progressed, seem to deepen and become more complicated. Was it a dream? He had just awoke from a sound sleep, with the thoughts of the first ghost of the evening still fresh in his mind. Was it not a mental creation, formed by the aid of the moon and his very vivid imagination; two things that are indispensable auxiliaries in giving life and character to such delusions? He argued the case both pro and con, pondering upon all conjectures that there were within the pale of reason, but could get no farther than the oft-repeated question—"Was it a woman—or a ghost?"

CHAPTER IV.

As the glorious orb of day sent its first rays of dazzling light through the tree-tops, gilding the leaves with its mellow rays, and transforming the millions of dewdrops that glistened upon the opening petals of blossoming nature into sparkling diamonds, Colonel Le Fontaine stepped out upon the lawn, and, impressed with the loveliness of earth's awakening, for a moment stood as if were entranced, then, smiling a morning welcome to the golden-breasted robins who had just left their nests, he passed slowly down the avenue, and was soon, by the thick foliage, obscured from view.

In two hours he returned, having enjoyed a brisk walk, feeling refreshed physically by the exercise, and rejuvenated mentally by his communion with nature.

In the parlor he met Lady Alice, who greeted him with a sweet smile, and, having passed the morning soliloquies, observed:

"You are an early riser, colonel."

"Yes, one gets accustomed to it in camp," he replied. "But, to cast that fact aside, I take delight in surprising nature in her morning robes."

"And I, too," she answered; "the air is so exhilarating, and all around is so beautiful."

"To change the subject to one of darkness and spectres, allow me to ask how you rested after your unexpected introduction to supernatural phenomena?"

"Very well, I thank you. I am now quite ashamed of my impetuous, after calm reflection upon the cause."

"And do you find any explanation for it?" he continued.

"I do not; I cannot with justice to myself stigmatize it as an optical illusion, and my mind affords no other reasonable explanation."

"I am in the same position exactly, and think that the least troublesome and best way will be to resign the case to the hands of 'Father Time,' and let that great judge decide it at his leisure."

"I agree with you perfectly, colonel. But let us enter; I think breakfast must be nearly ready, and for one would not object to partaking of it."

"I must agree with you now, Lady Alice, for my long walk has given me a voracious appetite;" and with this remark he followed his fair companion into the castle.

As they entered the drawing-room, Lady Beauford arose, and, with the blandest of smiles, whispered:

"Good morning, my dear colonel. I trust your repose was peaceful during the night."

"Quite, my lady," he replied, gazing directly into the depths of the purple-black eyes, "with the slight exception of a disturbing dream."

"Ah, the effects were only temporary, then, for you are looking well this morning," she replied in sweet tones, although the nightly orbs shot a glance at him which ill compared with her obsequious manner.

He was about to reply, when breakfast was announced, and the company repaired to the dining-room.

"My lord," observed Lady Beauford, as she seated herself, "will you oblige me by ordering the carriage? I intend to proceed to London by the nine o'clock train."

And her eyes, flashing upon him, seemed to say: "Make no objections, for I shall."

"What? Really, my dear, do you think your health will warrant it?" queried Lord Beauford with well-feigned solicitude, for although he nourished no particular affection for his wife, still he desired, as many husbands do, that the world should imagine that he did.

"I am happy to inform you that I am perfectly well. I have some purchases to make which cannot be postponed," she rejoined, in the kindest of tones; for, although loving him less than he did her, she also wished the world to think that she was the most affectionate of wives.

He made no farther objections, knowing it was useless, and at half-past eight o'clock Lady Beauford was reclining in her carriage, rolling towards Berkeley station for London.

In a little office in Lincoln's Inn Fields, up three flights of stairs, surrounded by cases of books, and paper thrown about in dire confusion, sat Richard Shrewder, attorney-at-law.

This gentleman was rather eccentric, and nourished great pride for one particular portion of his body, which, as the reader may readily imagine, was his head. For this reason it is but just that his description be commenced by referring to this indispensable, and, as its owner thought, invaluable and superior organ.

The caput which excited its possessor's self-love to such an extent was nearly round; upon each side

of which were ears rather long and narrow, and nearly concealed by the masses of hair that curled around them in sailor fashion, and which, by the kindness of the tonsorial artist, was made to appear a dark brown. His face was of a crimson hue and bore unmistakable evidence of being in close communion with sundry ardent spirits. His features were prominent; especially the nose, which had a faculty of turning down at the tip, quite annoying to the owner, and very amusing to the fun-loving urbane who loitered around the street. In form, he was tall and not badly proportioned, though he had a habit of bending forward, which detracted considerably from his personal appearance.

Mr. Richard Shrewder, as his name indicates, was a very shrewd person, and possessed of more assurance and presence of mind than any two practitioners at the Queen's Bench. His manner was soft, insidious, and very affable, and oftentimes prepossessing "juries" in his favour, where his points were weak, and his logic unavailing. He was scientifically insinuating, and would conceive of and repeat a voluminous falsehood with the most convincing air of candour, before an ordinary person could collect the truth and speak it; in fact it may be said that Shrewder lied upon principle, and when by mistake he uttered the truth—which was very rarely—he instantly corrected it, lest such a radical reaction should produce serious results. For in that respect he was very careful of his health.

If Mr. Richard Shrewder had acted upon good principles and cultivated the talent which by some unaccountable mistake nature had thrown away upon him, he might have been an honourable man, and an ornament to the learned profession which he now disgraced.

It is a sad fact, and, at the same time, a great misfortune, that there are many worthless, idle, crafty men in the legal profession, by whose hands the good ones are made to suffer, while the public do not discriminate, but cast calumny upon the whole.

On that radiant July morning Mr. Shrewder sat at his desk in a rather meditative mood, while ever and anon his hand wandered to his chin, groped among the bushy hair that adorned it, and pulled it vigorously.

For some time he sat thus, and was about to arise, when the door opened, and a little woman enveloped in a long black cloak, and her face nearly concealed from view by a hood of the same material, entered, advanced towards the desk, seated herself, and then, raising her hands, said:

"Oh, Mr. Shrewder, will be so kind as to tell me when my case be comin' off, because my poor boy he be a workin' night and da' to support me, and it's too bad, so it is, that a poor widder cannot have her dower what is left to her by her husband, so;" and for a few moments she shook her head ruefully and then exclaimed—"An', Mr. Shrewder, Mrs. McCull will swear that I never signed away my dower; no indeed, and Bunker he dinna treat me right, for he kept me running all the cold days, and my poor boy—"

"Yes, yes," mumbled the attorney, "you've told me the story several times, but I forget your name."

"Sure I've been here time and again fur ye to remember me—"

"Very true," rejoined Mr. Shrewder, "but I cannot recollect names."

"Sarah Ann Cane, then, an' I hope you'll not be forgetting me as well as my name, for my poor boy—"

Mr. Shrewder waved his hand deprecatingly, with the other plunged into a stack of papers, and appeared to be very earnestly searching for an all-important document. At last he drew one forth, and, looking at it, said:

"A private hearing is appointed on your case to-morrow, at ten; do not fail of being here promptly. You'll have your dower, never fear," with another of those bland, deceitful smiles.

"An' the gude Lord'll bless ye, for my poor boy he be working very hard. An' do ye think it'll come off now? To-morrow will I come; ah, I hope ye'll not disappoint me, for I am only a poor woman, as wants only her rights, and you know my poor boy he be—"

"Good-morning—good-morning," ejaculated Mr. Shrewder, impatiently.

"Gude da' to ye," and with these words the simple, yet honest and trusting old lady left that office, which she had first entered two years before, and paid the attorney ten pounds sterling for instituting proceedings to procure her dower. Nearly every day since then she had called upon him, and, although oftentimes sad, still hoped that eventually she would obtain her justice.

At the time Mr. Shrewder received her money, he examined the registry of deeds, and ascertained that she had signed away all right and title to her dower. Too indolent thoroughly to examine the case, he re-

tained her ten pounds, and had continued to delude her with the belief that to-morrow would bring a decision, in a case which the courts had never heard of, and were never likely to do.

Mr. Shrewder, having rid himself of his querulous client, made a memorandum to be sure and be absent at ten the next day, and then proceeded to double the client's costs upon a case that was, to be amicably adjusted, that he might put the overplus into his own pocket.

He had partly finished this interesting transaction, when another person entered. The attorney raised his eyes, bowed, and then resumed his figuring.

For some moments the young man remained nervously silent, and then advancing, observed: "Will you pay me the pound that you have owed me for more than a year?"

"Year, is it?" he carelessly rejoined. "I'm short now, come at ten o'clock to-morrow."

The youth's eye flashed with contempt, and, turning round, he left the office. He did not expect to receive it, but merely wished to ease his mind by trying. A person that did expect Richard Shrewder to liquidate his debts, would have been stamped as a candidate eminently qualified in every respect to fill an exalted position in a lunatic asylum.

Mr. Shrewder threw himself back in his chair, and was preparing to enjoy a few moments of solitude, when the door opened, and Lady Beauford swept haughtily into the room. The attorney still preserved his ungracious attitude, smiled broadly, and stroked his whiskers.

Lady Beauford seated herself, removed her veil, and, darting a glance of indignation and contempt at the legal gentleman, ejaculated sharply:

"Mr. Shrewder!"

"Lady Beauford?" he smirked, with an air of nonchalance.

"Will you attend to me, sir?" she hastily queried. "Certainly, with the greatest of pleasure," he instantly answered, changing his position. "Now, my dear lady—"

"You disgust me," she interrupted, in vexed tones. "Your smiles are only substitutes for oaths. I wish for none of them; I have business with you."

She gazed upon him significantly for an instant, and then said very slowly:

"The case which you said you settled some time ago, has proved not to have been."

Amazement rested upon the attorney's features, and, after meditating a moment, he rejoined:

"Really, my lady, you must be mistaken; why, I know you are."

"How dare you contradict me, sir? I know that I am right."

"Have you any proof?" he asked, with growing interest.

"Yes, and conclusive; it is evidence in ink."

"Ha, say you so?" ejaculated the attorney, "very bad; but 'twas not my fault; my clerk must have lost the papers."

She sharply responded, "You should know those whom you trust!"

"Yes," he muttered, "there is something in that; practise it yourself, eh?"

"I desire none of your airy and weak sarcasm," she angrily replied. "I know you, Richard Shrewder, and you ought to know me."

"Hum, yes, I have a slight idea that I do," he answered, with a significant leer in his watery gray eyes. "But how about this affair; I suppose you want it settled?"

"I do," she blazed, while her eyes flashed; "and remember, fail not at your peril!"

"Certainly not," he smilingly rejoined. "I understand you; very unpleasant to have these old cases hang on so long, very; but, my lady, might I trouble you for one hundred pounds?"

"One hundred pounds! what impudence! You shall not have one penny!"

Mr. Richard Shrewder did not allow this brusque reply to disturb his equanimity, but replied, while a mocking smile played over his features:

"Oh, no, my lady, no hurry at all, I assure you. I would not have you give me a pound now, no indeed. I shall shortly pass Beauford Castle; I'll stop in and see you—save you trouble. Very much pleased to see me—a-h, I thought you would."

"You aggravating—oh, I wish—here, take these!" and biting her lips with anger Lady Beauford stood regarding him with darkened brow and glittering eye.

"Ah! how very kind of you," replied Richard, with a low, mocking bow, as he reached forth his hand, and with a grasp like that of a wolverine, clutched the notes and crowded them into his vest pocket. "I shall always respect you, my lady, always."

"You are a serpent!" she ejaculated, darting at him a look of rage.

"Oh, thank you, my lady," he rejoined, placing

his hand upon his heart in counterfeit humility; then, changing his tone, he continued: "But subtlety is a serpent's quality; I knew not that I possessed it before. I thank you for the suggestion; serpents are treacherous, my lady!"

"You dare not, Richard Shrewder!" she exclaimed, stepping forward, while a withering glance shot from her fathomless black eye, and her nostrils dilated with passion.

"Certainly not—"

At that moment the door flew open with a clang, and a man with flushed face and flashing eye, entered; an instant he gazed around the apartment, and then hastily exclaimed:

"I wish to see Mr. Shrewder, the eminent lawyer!"

The attorney's first impulse was to demand in indignation the cause of the interruption; but that word "eminent" soothed his anger, sounded sweetly upon his ear, and he politely replied:

"I am engaged now, sir; please to call again."

"Very well, sir," replied the stranger; and, casting a searching glance at Lady Beauford, he withdrew.

"Who is he?" she quickly asked.

"I never saw him before; why?"

"Did you notice his eye?"

"I perceive your drift," replied the attorney, rubbing his hands with delight; "you are very keen; you quite surprise me."

"It is not improbable; but you must look sharp."

"Never fear for Richard, my lady."

"When I fear anything you will know it," she scornfully returned. "Now, I am about to leave you; but remember, if my commands be not obeyed, Richard Shrewder will enter law-practice in an entirely new form."

"They shall be, my dear lady, they shall be," he obsequiously answered. "Your wit is very rich; I appreciate it."

Turning round, she looked him steadily in the eye for an instant, and then queried, in sweet tones:

"Duels are not lawful, are they?"

"Not now, my lady, no."

"It is manslaughter, isn't it?"

"It is."

"It is strange that men will fight duels and kill each other, isn't it, Mr. Shrewder?"

"Very strange, my lady, very strange," replied the attorney, while his eye twinkled.

Lady Beauford left the office, and, as she reached the street, dropped her veil over her face and walked rapidly away.

In a moment the stranger, who had burst so unceremoniously into the attorney's office, stepped forth from a doorway where he had been concealed, and followed directly in her path.

Lady Beauford knew not of his proximity, and hurried on, until she arrived at an hotel, where she entered a carriage, and gave the driver orders to proceed to Lord Lyndon's, at the West End.

The stranger's restless blue eye noted her every movement; and as he saw the carriage containing her ladyship roll away, he hailed a hansom cab, quickly entered, hastily closed the door, and peremptorily ordered:

"Follow that carriage; don't lose sight of it for an instant."

The cabman whipped up his horse, and dashed swiftly over the pavements, while the occupant of the vehicle kept his keen blue eye upon the hack in advance of him.

"Some aristocrat or noble," muttered Mr. Henri Chalmers, as he saw Lady Beauford's carriage stop at a palatial residence, and saw her alight and ascend the steps.

The hansom cab rolled slowly by the mansion, while its occupant endeavoured to discern its inmates. "Turn," he said a moment after, "and stop at the same house."

In a moment the cab drew up before the door, and the gentleman calling himself Henri Chalmers sprang out, ran hastily up the steps and rang the bell. In a moment the same footman appeared who had admitted Lady Beauford.

Regarding the servant with deep scrutiny, Chalmers slid a half-crown in his hand, and said, lowly:

"Who was the lady who just entered?"

"Lady Beauford, of Marion," he replied.

The stranger bowed his thanks, re-entered his cab, and was driven to his hotel.

Arriving at his room, he drew near the window and gazed meditatively out upon the street. Presently a carriage rolled by.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, as his eyes fell upon its occupant, "my lady again!"

And with this exclamation he rushed from the room, hurried downstairs, gained the street, and followed the carriage at a brisk walk; and, as it was moving at a moderate pace, he managed to keep near it with but little exertion.

After a rather tedious route, the carriage stopped

at the station, and, as our peculiar friend was only a few rods in the rear, he soon came up with it, and, walking carelessly by, leaned against a pillar a few steps from the vehicle.

"Now you will come, my dear Lady Lyndon," murmured Lady Beauford, in sweet tones, as she alighted from the carriage, "for I should not enjoy our trip to Scotland at all were you not with me."

"Thanks, my dear friend," replied Lady Lyndon, "I shall look forward to it with pleasure. Give my love to Lady Alice."

"With pleasure, dear friend; adieu."

And, as Lady Beauford turned, she came face to face with Mr. Chalmers. The purple-black eyes flashed, but they could not turn the gaze of the dauntless blue orb that met them; and, with a scowl upon her face, Lady Beauford glided haughtily by.

The unknown regarded her for a moment in a serio-comic manner, and then, with a half-suppressed ejaculation, turned and entered the station by another door. There he remained until the train started, then leaving the station he walked slowly back to his hotel, muttering as he went:

"By Jove, what an eye that woman has! I can read more in it than I can in some books. She admires the colonel? Oh, yes, she is too affectionate; I don't favour such rabid fancies. She doesn't love me a great deal, though; oh, no; she may, sometime, however; but we shall see, we—shall—see."

(To be continued.)

THE MAN WITH TWO MEMORIES.

THE curious, though by no means unexampled case of George Nickern, a German, who, after being all but killed by a fall from a platform some months ago, and for many weeks entirely deprived of the use of every sense as well as of consciousness, has recovered his health completely and his powers of mind,—his memory excepted, which at present dates entirely from the beginning of his recovery, and is a complete blank as to all and everyone,—persons, words, things,—his knowledge of which had been acquired before the fall, cannot but suggest the question what relation memory really has to the personal identity of man.

The lad to whom we have referred seems to have been for a month at least in a condition of complete detachment from the outer world, without any power of sight, or hearing, or speech; at the end of seven weeks he had recovered these senses and could use his tongue freely, but he retained no glimmer of recollection of any word, either of his native German or of English, which he had known before the accident, and his own mother and other friends were to him entirely new acquaintances, whom he had to learn to know afresh. He had to begin acquiring the language of those around him as if he had been an infant, and his progress was almost as slow. Still, all his faculties seemed acute and bright, and, dating from the origin of his new memory, he seemed to retain impressions well. His case is not a unique one. It is not impossible, if we may judge by some similar cases, that he should suddenly recover some day the whole of his suddenly extinguished stock of knowledge.

There is an old case, commonly cited in works on Psychology, of a student whose memory was suddenly annihilated by a fever. He began painfully learning everything afresh, and had got as far as Latin and just mastered the Latin grammar, when his whole stock of previous knowledge returned as suddenly as it left him. Nay, it is even quite possible that this lad might, if he had a fever, or a fresh fall, or any new disturbance of the brain, recover his old memory, and lose his new one, i. e., recover the recollection of all that he knew before the accident, and lose the memory of all that he has acquired since. Cases are on record of this sort of alternating memory, due to some fever, the first attack of which modified seriously, we suppose, the condition of the nervous system, and the second attack of which reinstated the old condition of the brain, obliterating completely the latter phase.

CIVIL SERVANTS IN DEBT.—A Treasury minute has been issued respecting civil servants who are in debt. It is declared that pecuniary embarrassment, "if occasioned by imprudence or other reprehensible cause, will be held to be an offence," as will also "the mere fact, under whatever plea, of becoming a party to accommodation bills, whether for his own purposes or for another person." Insolvency or arrest for debt will be followed by dismissal from the service, unless it can be shown that the person reduced to such a position has succumbed to "unavoidable misfortune," or "unless the case shall be characterised by previous circumstances of extenuation."

WHIPPING A SCHOOLBOY.—A despatch from Chattanooga, dated December 28, furnishes the following:

A tragic affair occurred on Salt Creek, 40 miles below here, a few days since, the particulars of which are as follows:—It seems that Mr. Beane, a school teacher, attempted to whip a boy named Hutchison, who resisted and left school. A day or two afterward young Hutchison, accompanied by his brother and a man named Smith, visited the school house for the avowed purpose of chastising Beane, but not finding him there they proceeded to his residence. Beane saw them coming, and, anticipating their errand, armed himself, as also did Mr. Moore, who happened to be at the house. On their arrival, Hutchison said they intended giving him (Beane) a thrashing. Moore remonstrated, when Smith drew a pistol and shot him dead. This was a signal for all to produce pistols. Beane shot and instantly killed Cyrus Hutchison, brother of the schoolboy. He had scarcely fired, when Smith, who had instantly killed Moore, fired another barrel of his repeater at Beane; the ball struck, but failed to immediately disable him. Beane then turned on Smith and lodged three balls in his body, inflicting wounds which resulted mortally in a few minutes. Twenty minutes after the affray commenced Moore, Beane, Cyrus Hutchison, and Smith lay dead on the ground within a few feet of each other.

SOMETIMES SAPPHIRE SOMETIMES PALE.

By J. R. LITTLEPAGE.

CHAPTER XIX.

Am I mad that I should cherish,
That which bears but bitter fruit?
I will pluck it from my bosom,
Tho' my heart be at the root.
Shall it not be soon to me
To harp on such a mouldered string?
I am shamed thro' all my nature
To have loved so slight a thing!

Tennyson.

"I HARDLY like to mention it, it is so delicate a subject," said Miss Leech, looking down on the carpet with a very meek and sorrowful air.

"Then it is a pity, I think, that you troubled yourself to come here," cried the impetuous Cathleen, quickly.

Miss Leech darted a look at the heiress, which that young creature did not see; it was a side look, sly, sardonic, pregnant with spite. Miss Leech's face, always pale, grew ashen lead-coloured, when she was enraged. That she was desperately so now would have been quite manifest to any student of the human countenance. But Cathleen Lamotte looked moodily into the fire, unconscious that eyes full of hatred were bent upon her.

"I would not have come, Miss Lamotte," said the companion, in a tone, meeker if possible than the last, "were it not, that where you are concerned—you who have always been so generous towards me, I feel far more acutely than you can imagine."

"I am very much obliged to you," said the beautiful Cathleen, raising her spirited head, and looking straight at Miss Leech with her large, honest, flashing eyes. "Tell me, if you please, what this matter is."

"It concerns Mr. Earnshaw, the tutor," said Miss Leech, looking at Cathleen, to observe the effect of the sudden mention of his name.

Cathleen's face flushed bright crimson; she felt the flush, and was mortified beyond expression, at having betrayed her feelings.

"Well," she said, quickly, "what about the tutor?"

"He is a sinister, plotting knave, I firmly believe," said Miss Leech.

Cathleen's heart seemed to cease beating, her tongue refused utterance, her disordered spirit seemed to swim in eddying whirls of passion, anger, consternation. At last, mastering her strong emotion by a great effort, the heiress said:

"Why do you come and tell me your private impressions respecting this tutor, my dear lady? What can it possibly matter to me?"

"Much, much more than you could imagine, dearest Miss Lamotte," said the companion, seizing the hand of Cathleen, and impressing upon it a Judas kiss. "This man has come here solely with the hope of winning your hand and fortune. I have every reason to know it."

"Please to tell me your reasons," said Cathleen, in a cold, studied tone.

"Well, dear Miss Lamotte, I overheard a conversation just now in the shrubbery, between the new land-steward and Master Viner's tutor. I was among the bushes, trying to reach a lovely branch of scarlet arbutus berries; neither of the gentlemen heard me, they were walking in the broad path. I heard Mr. Arkwright say, 'She is certainly peerlessly lovely, and it is a pity she is likely to marry that wrinkled

old lord.' 'If I were vain,' replied Earnshaw, with a laugh, 'I could tell you something, but I won't; and now, Arkwright, is it really true, or a sham, that this young woman is to have eight thousand a year. I would not have come here, unless I had believed that she had the money as her own disposal. Without her money, Miss Lamotte has little, if any charm in my sight.'"

Cathleen had become as white as marble, she locked her hands in each other, and stared hopelessly at the fire. She forgot the presence of the false-tongued woman, who had just uttered this great untruth; she only saw herself, a handsome, spirited, dashing creature, who had hitherto lived a happy life, caring and knowing nothing of love and its torments, and now succumbing to a misplaced affection, pouring out the treasures of her heart upon an unworthy object, humbling herself, almost to the dust, before an unfeeling schemer, who mocked at her when out of her hearing. Good heaven! had she not stooped to ask him that day in the shrubbery if he would be contented with love, poverty, toil, and Cathleen Lamotte! How he must have laughed at her afterwards.

"Miss Leech," said Cathleen, at last, looking fixedly at the lady, "you have done me a vast service in putting me on my guard with that wretched person to whom you allude; but you must promise me one thing, mention this subject to no living soul, let everything go on as it has done hitherto, and leave the miscreant in my hands to punish."

A smile wreathed the beautiful lips of Cathleen as she spoke.

"Leave him to me," said Cathleen, waving her long, white hand. "I will revenge myself."

Alas! the poor heiress, in her pain and her pride, forgot that divine command which forbids vengeance to the human creature, and claims it as the right of heaven.

"Miss Leech," continued the heiress, walking to her jewel-case, and opening it. "I will not pretend that I love you, nor will I offer you my friendship. I always try to be truthful, and candidly I never took a liking to you. But you have done me a service; I thank you, and I wish to offer you a reward more substantial than a girl's friendship. Accept this bracelet, either keep it or sell it, I do not ask you to wear it for my sake; there need be no nonsense, no sentiment between us."

Cathleen handed the bracelet to Miss Leech as she spoke. The companion's eyes glistened at sight of the jewels.

"Oh, how good, how generous you are," she said, simpering and smiling with joy, and at the same time pretending to wipe her eyes with her embroidered handkerchief, as though she were weeping for Cathleen's pain.

Miss Lamotte now walked up and down the room with long, graceful steps. She was like a caged, enraged lioness. Miss Leech watched her with satisfaction.

"I am so glad to see you suffer; I am so rejoiced at the opportunity of humbling you," said the spiteful woman to herself, "for I hate you, Cathleen Lamotte. I hate your beauty, your wild, careless manners, and your lavish generosity, which can afford to make light of sums that others must toil, strive, and wear a mask all their days to obtain. I wish you could marry this fellow, and come down to poverty. I will help him to gain you, this wild nephew of the good reactor."

"Miss Leech," said Cathleen, suddenly pausing in her march, "I want to be alone; would you mind leaving me?"

"And now, I will revenge myself," said Cathleen, seating herself before the fire; and she set her white teeth, and brooded over her wrongs with an angry brow and a sparkling eye.

"He came here to win my heart, that he might gain my fortune, did he?" The proud enraged girl clenched her white hand, and shook it defiantly in the air.

"And oh, to think that I should have fallen into his trap, that I have yielded up my heart captive to him, and almost told him so; and he to boast—mean villain—to boast to Arkwright, the land-steward, and to hint, and to say that without fortune I am not beautiful in his eyes. Oh, oh, oh!" she exclaimed, now aloud, tossed up her hands wildly, then bent her head, and a long sob lifted up her heart high in her breast. "And I could have loved him so," she went on again presently; "I could have sacrificed pride, position—everything, for that man. But now, oh now, Mr. Percy Earnshaw, you shall find your match in Cathleen Lamotte. I will deceive you—I will mortify you. I cannot wound your heart, for you are heartless. I cannot make you suffer for love's sake, because you are loveless; but you have pride. Ah, I will smite it down. I will pour scorn upon it; only trust me."

Cathleen in truth had given all her passionate love to the tutor. Hitherto, completely fancy-free, not

even a passing liking had disturbed her mind with a pleasing image for a single day. And now her whole soul was plunged into a vortex of passion. She had yielded up her heart, unasked, to the dark-browed tutor. He had come there first, to win her affection, secondly, to gain her fortune; the first she had given, and the thought lashed the poor girl's pride to madness.

"He shall not know, he shall not know," she murmured to herself. "I will humble him—yes, to the very dust."

The afternoon wore away, while the heiress was giving way to these tumultuous feelings. The snow clouds had gathered and hung low, and blinding sheets of the white feathery mizzels were driven down by the wintry wind.

"It will be a snowy Christmas," said Cathleen, rising, and stretching out her beautiful arms with a gesture of weariness, and bending forward her head, to catch a better view of the picturesque storm. "Ah! and it shall be a merry Christmas also. I will fill the house with music, laughter, and feasting. Sir Random Racket, the wild, fox-hunting baronet, shall be invited here to spend a week; a troop of gay guardsmen from London, shall come to pass as many madcap merry days as they choose. I will go privately to my grandfather, and I will tell him that I have made up my mind to accept my Lord Beechfield when the time expires; but that I do not wish the matter made public just yet, and I will tell him, that as a reward for my ready obedience, I only claim the privilege of being allowed to throw the house open now, during the holidays; and to give a series of entertainments, which shall set all the county talking of the vast wealth, and lavish expenditure of that great heiress, Cathleen Lamotte. Yes, most greedy suitor, most calculating tutor, I will dazzle your cold eyes with the profusion of wealth which you have coveted. Our richest gold plate shall stand forth on the sideboards; I will blaze in diamonds. Your covetous heart shall throb with desire to possess my wealth, and then I will turn round upon you with such scorn, that your mean spirit shall shrink within itself. Oh, that I may be able to punish you; that I may make you endure some part of what I suffer now!" and then Cathleen sat down again, and began to weep hopelessly.

After a while, however, the heiress dried her tears, bathed her eyes, and rung for Fantine to assist her in making a splendid toilette for the dinner-hour. About a quarter to seven, Miss Lamotte, superb as a queen, in dark velvet and ruby ornaments, found her way to the library, where Mr. Lamotte usually spent the half-hour immediately preceding dinner.

The grand-looking gentleman, his silver hair powdered, his white hands sparkling with diamonds, sat before a brilliant fire, reading attentively some heavy book, which he closed with a start, when his beautiful grandchild entered.

"What do you want?" said the squire, uncereemoniously.

"My dear grandpapa," replied Cathleen, "I have come to you, like a good girl, to say that I have quite made up my mind to marry Lord Beechfield, if I can keep him to his bargain; but I do not wish the matter made public. I do not even wish his lordship to feel quite sure of me until the three months are over, because I have a whim. I wish to flirt unrestrained, as Cathleen Lamotte, for three months longer. I wish to take my leave of the world, where I have reigned as belle, with *déclat* and spirit. I do not wish to go about moping, as the melancholy promised bride of old Lord Beechfield, with everybody pitying me and crying 'poor thing,' on account of the disparity in our years. No; I wish to refuse some half-dozen more offers, to show the world that I act from choice. Let Dungarvon Towers be for the next three months the scene of such gaiety and splendour, as has not dazzled the eyes of the good folks of the county since you came into possession. Will you agree to this? and if you will I will sign to you a sacred promise to wed Lord Beechfield at the end of three months."

"You are a madcap," said the squire, with a stern smile, "but I will agree to what you wish; only understand, I will have no disgraceful flirting carried on, do you comprehend me?"

Cathleen's cheek had been brightly flushed with emotion, but now it became of an almost ashy whiteness.

"What do you mean, sir?" she asked proudly, and her nostril dilated, while her splendid eyes blazed.

"You need not be angry," said the squire, in a scoffing tone, "I only mean that I will not have the name of Lamotte disgraced by your name being associated with that of any gentleman, whom, in your outrageous love of coquetry, you may deceive. Remember that if you conceal your engagement and encourage other men to make you offers, you will become a sort of byword in the world."

This was true, and poor Cathleen looked down at the floor in perplexity. She could not tell her grandfather the truth, she could not tell him that the sole man whom she wished to deceive and trample on was her cousin's tutor. She was no coquette at heart, whatever her manner might have led men and women to think her. She had the most profound respect for genuine affection, if such could be found; but now it was her firm conviction that such did not exist on earth, save in the depths of her own torn, outraged heart.

"I promise," she said at last, slowly, "that I will not flirt with any gentleman or nobleman you may invite here. I will act the part of the careless creature, who believes not in love, for, in good truth, I do not believe in it. Now, my dear grandpapa, let us be friends; and do let me issue cards of invitation for Christmas week. Let us send to London for scene painters, rich dresses, and let us have such splendid amateur theatricals as shall make all the country stare, and talk for two months; is it a bargain?"

Squire Lamotte coldly assented. Cathleen kissed his brow, and then the sound of the dinner-bell called them into the other wing of the mansion. After dinner, in the drawing-room, Mrs. Lamotte languidly proposed a game of whist, and thus it came about that messages were sent to Miss Sheen, and to Earnshaw, to come and make up the rubber, for Squire Lamotte retired again to his library and his heavy book as soon as the coffee was carried away. The message found Earnshaw engaged at a game of chess, in the large room which he occupied, with Oscar Arkwright.

The two young men were silent over their game; each was more occupied with his own thoughts than with the queens, bishops, and pawns.

"Ha, ha! you are fortunate," exclaimed Oscar, while a bright flush dyed his fair face. "You are very fortunate in being considered worthy to play carpet knight in the grand drawing-room at Duncarvon Towers. You are the tutor, and by pleasing the pet nephew you have pleased the lady mistress. For me, I have pleased nobody. I am but the land-steward, and yet I have known this Mademoiselle Cathleen from childhood, and played with her in the nursery here. The rector's nephew ought to be considered something of a gentleman."

"It is an oversight, depend upon it," said Earnshaw, warmly.

He felt much for the mortification of Oscar.

"Ah, well," returned the young gentleman, waving his hand over the chessboard, and laughing; "that won't quite kill me, will it? Thank heaven, here's a splendid fire roaring up the chimney, and I'll establish myself close to it, with a book of fiction, and when you return, I'll have a cosy little supper laid out for you here."

The two young men shook hands and separated. Oscar had not been long seated near the fire, when there was a very cautious rap upon the door.

"Come in," said the land-steward.

Miss Leech, wearing black silk, and a thin gold chain, with her light hair very neatly arranged, glided into the room.

"Ah, I am most delighted to see you," cried Oscar, rising, and placing a chair for the lady; "but allow me to secure that door more completely, for I should be grieved did anybody presume to disturb our little *tit-a-tit*."

CHAPTER XX.

My love is strengthened, tho' more weak in seeming.

I love not less, tho' less the show appear;

That love is merchandised, whose rich esteeming,

The owner's tongue doth publish everywhere.

Shakespeare's "Sonnets."

"I MANAGED it admirably," said Miss Leech, looking down slyly at the carpet. "I went into Miss Lamotte's room while she was sitting, buried in a pleasant daydream, by the fire, and then I begged pardon and told her what I had overheard in the shrubbery."

"Rather, fair lady, what you had not heard," said Oscar, with a low laugh. "How did she receive the news?"

"Oh, she was smitten to the earth, beaten down into the very dust," cried Miss Leech in a tone of triumph. "I never could have believed that anything could so have wounded the spirit of Cathleen Lamotte."

Oscar glanced up at his companion with a curious expression on his face.

"You have a strong dislike to Miss Lamotte?" he said, in a tone of inquiry.

Miss Leech seemed to tremble with spite or excitement. She hesitated a moment, then answered, speaking hurriedly, and in a low, fierce voice:

"You can never understand how much I hate her, I am poor, proud, portionless, of good blood, but disowned by my mother, who married a second time, and turned me adrift, to earn my bread, at the age of

seventeen. I had not been highly enough educated for a governess, so I accepted the post of humble companion to a rich invalid widow, in a dreary, respectable London suburb.

"Ah, what a life I spent for five years; it was so dull, so unlike the life which a woman, a human creature, with heart, hopes and natural cravings, should have passed. My soul grew quite poisoned: the constant repression, the dreary walks after the invalid chair, the readings aloud in the long winter of theological works, which I did not understand, and did not wish to understand. How I used to envy the bright young maidens whom I met occasionally in the streets, or who called, perhaps once or twice in a year, to know how Mrs. Spicer was getting on."

"At length Mrs. Spicer died of a worse attack of bronchitis than usually attacked her during the winter. She was not an unkind woman; she left me five hundred pounds to begin the world with. I advertised, Mrs. Lamotte answered the advertisement; and I came here four years ago. Alas, I had lived so long in rooms with the blinds drawn down, had replied in whispers, and walked about in list slippers until every bit of natural youth and gaiety had gone out of me for ever. The spirit and dash, the carelessness and pretty impertinence of Miss Lamotte rankled in my soul like poisoned arrows. She spoke rudely to me, and made fun of the humble subservient manner which I had learnt at Mrs. Spicer's. She used to mimic my 'yes, madam,' and 'thank you, madam,' in a manner which so enraged me, that I have lain awake at night sometimes, wishing that there was no deadly sin in killing Cathleen Lamotte."

Miss Leech had grown deadly pale, she beat her foot fiercely on the floor, and Oscar watched her curiously.

"That was but a mad thought," went on Miss Leech, "I learned afterwards that to destroy your enemy's happiness is a much safer way of revenging yourself than to take his life. I watched, but there seemed no vulnerable point. I believed Cathleen utterly without feeling, until this tutor came. Soon I discovered that she loved him, and what is more, he desperately loves her. At first I thought I would consign her to poverty, and let her weep him, but I saw that the more poisoned shaft would be to convince her of his scorn. You, for some reason, wish to separate this pair, and I have consented to work in concert with you; but I wish to know your motive."

"You shall know in good time," responded Oscar, with a gloomy smile.

"If you love her, and are content to share poverty with her, I will aid you," pursued Miss Leech; "she does not love you, and so will suffer a double trial. But how is such a thing to be brought about?"

"I am not enamoured of poverty, Miss Leech," said Oscar, "I would gain possession of Cathleen's wealth."

"But unless I am to see her humbled, I will not work with you," said Miss Leech, crossing her hands resolutely upon her lap.

"You shall see her humbled to the dust, to the very dust, and grovelling on the ground at my feet, if you have but patience," said Oscar, with a trembling lip. "And more than that, the mother, the cold, insolent mother—don't you hate her?" pursued Oscar. "You shall see both those women humbled, Miss Leech; but I confess that no such object as mere revenge, pure and simple, actuates me. I would win Cathleen's wealth; and if I do, I will settle five thousand pounds on you, that you may have an independence, and escape, if you choose, the buffets and scorn of the world."

Miss Leech bent her head and smiled.

"I shall hold you to your bargain, Mr. Arkwright," she said, "and I shall expect my five thousand pounds paid punctually. At the same time, I wish you to give me more instructions."

"Well," said Oscar, thoughtfully, "I think we must let this couple alone for a little while. Soon she will insult him, his pride will take offence, and then, perhaps, he will leave Duncarvon, which is all we want of him; but then there is to battle with the wrinkled, padded, bewigged noble, with his scented waistcoats, and his false teeth. We must get rid of him. You will help me there, Miss Leech?"

"Yes; only how are you to be presented as an eligible match to this insolent girl? tell me that, Mr. Arkwright."

"Nay, leave it to me," replied Oscar, with a smile. "My projects are built on the foundations, deep laid, of my plot; a plot which will jeopardise more than one life, perhaps. Are you a brave woman?"

"I do not know fear," responded Miss Leech. "Poverty and dependence have given a false tremour to my voice; but I have the heart of a Roman matron."

"The time may come then," said Oscar, with a gloomy smile, "when I shall take you more into my confidence, Miss Leech; but tell me, will not the possession of five thousand pounds be sweeter to you

than the punishment of Cathleen Lamotte? I must tell you this much, I intend to humble her, I intend to take her fortune, I intend to make her my wife, but I have no intention of making her miserable. I do not hate Miss Lamotte."

"All men sing her praises, bow down at her feet, and humble themselves before her," said Miss Leech, and the lady turned pale as she spoke: "We women cannot so easily forget her insolence; at the same time I shall be content with the punishment you hold in store for her, at least, for the present. To be balked of her lover, to find that he despises her, after she has stooped to love beneath her, must be worm-wood to that proud soul; and then to be compelled into marriage with one whom she does not love, and who has no rank nor fortune to bestow; to be mocked by the world for making an unequal match, and yet to feel that she has sacrificed herself without love, all this will be a little punishment for Miss Lamotte. And now, Mr. Arkwright, I wish you good-night."

Miss Leech arose as she spoke and tendered her hand to the land-steward. Oscar held the thin hand for a moment in his, and glanced up insolently into the lady's eyes; he had not risen from his seat, and there was a species of impertinence in the whole action which nettled the pride of Miss Leech.

"What do you mean, sir?" she asked, struggling to disengage her hand. "I am not here to flirt with you, Mr. Arkwright, but to work in concert for a certain object."

Oscar released the lady's hand, smiled a sour smile, and crossed his arms over his chest.

"I am not going to make love to you, Miss Leech," he said; "but I wish you would accord me a little friendship and sympathy. You seem like a woman without natural regard for your fellow creatures. I never heard you express a kind feeling for man, woman, or child, except when you are speaking falsely to the Ladies Lamotte."

"I have no affection, sir," said Miss Leech, and her pale cheek flared with a sudden flush. "I have never been loved. I am thirty years of age, and if anybody loved me now, I should scorn him."

Oscar burst into a laugh.

"A most extraordinary lady! Now some men would set to work to gain your heart, after such a challenge as that, but I have not the time. I wish, though, with all my soul, that you may meet your match, fair dame, in some shape."

"And I wish," said Miss Leech, "that you would talk and act like a sensible man, and not like a foolish popinjay."

Then, with a cold smile, she glided from the room.

Oscar sat and brooded over the fire, rather deep into the night. He told the servant who brought in the supper-tray to lay a knife and fork for Mr. Earnshaw, who would return presently.

It was half-past eleven before Oscar heard the step of the tutor in the passage, then the handle of the door was turned, and Earnshaw entered the room. Oscar glanced up at him curiously. There was a deep flush on Earnshaw's dark cheek; his eyes sparkled. He was as if he were spiritually intoxicated, although nothing in the shape of food or drink of any kind had passed his lips since he had left the presence of Oscar. He took a chair and sat down before the fire. Oscar watched him curiously.

"What is the matter, my dear fellow?" he asked, at length, with a slight laugh. "You look as hilarious as if you had come suddenly into a fortune, and yet—"

Oscar purposely cut short his own sentence; he wished Earnshaw to think that he was really puzzled by his demeanour.

"I have no reason to be hilarious, I suppose," said Earnshaw; "have you anything there for our supper, Arkwright?"

"Yes. A cold veal pie, and a bottle of Burgundy; they take care here, at any rate, that we shall not starve; and what have you been doing to amuse yourself in the drawing-room?" continued Oscar, drawing closer to the table, but not taking his eyes from Earnshaw.

"We have been playing cards," responded Earnshaw.

"Oh, and have you not been playing at love-making, Earnshaw?" continued Oscar, with a smile. "Has not that supreme coquette been flattering you?"

Earnshaw could not deny that she had. In fact, Cathleen in pursuance of her fierce and violent scheme of vengeance upon the man whom she loved, but who she believed despised her, had resolved utterly to deceive him, to draw him into a declaration, and then to humiliate him: be it understood that Cathleen had no idea that she should disappoint his affections, she only believed that she would disappoint the avarice of Earnshaw.

"Miss Lamotte has been most singularly gracious to me," said Earnshaw, speaking in a voice which emotion rendered hoarse.

"Ah, ha! she intends to turn upon him, and sting

him with her scorn," thought Oscar. "Well, let her do it, it will be the better way, and then Earnshaw will quit this house. I want him gone."

"Perhaps then," said Oscar, with a smile, "she is caught at last in a web of her own weaving; perhaps she really does love you!"

Earnshaw glanced up at him quickly. "Do you say that?" he exclaimed. "Why, I was quite prepared for warnings and counter warnings; surely you don't think it possible that Miss Lamotte could care for me?"

"Why not?" replied Oscar, coldly. "Coquettes are sometimes caught at last."

"Not to that extent," said Earnshaw, shaking his head. "I would never marry a lady of Miss Lamotte's wealth, while I am poor and unknown, and she would never love me enough to give up her wealth for my sake; it is hopeless every way."

"And yet, my fine moth, you keep on fluttering about this brilliant light, though your wings are scorched every time you approach it. You will never have the courage to flee from Dungarvon Towers, until Madame Cathleen insults you outrageously, which she is almost certain to do, for she hates you now."

Thus thought Oscar, but he only smiled, ate his supper with good appetite, and pressed the viands upon Earnshaw.

About twelve o'clock the young men separated for the night. Earnshaw passed his room for hours.

"I am in the deepest perplexity," said the young man to himself. "Miss Lamotte has said words to me to-night, which there is no mistaking. Either she loves me, or she wishes to make a fool of me, and— a madman, a madman," repeated the young man, standing before his mirror for a moment, and looking agape into the reflection of his own face. Was that the face of Percy Earnshaw, sometime student of the learned German university? That calm, manly countenance, at once cheerful, thoughtful, and benevolent, was now marked by different emotions. The tumults of passion had disturbed its serenity; love had kindled fires in the grave eyes; the cheek was flushed, unrest had stamped the lofty brow; altogether it was a wild, eager, anxious face, which looked at Earnshaw from his mirror.

He put down his lamp, threw himself into a chair, and covered his eyes with his hands.

"I love her," said the young man, aloud, "and my love is of the deepest and strongest that can throb in the heart of humanity. I would yield her up my life, if she asked it of me. I would do anything for her sake, anything that was not wrong. I would work night and day in a coal-pit for weeks, if I might be blessed by a smile or a kiss from her lips. I would suffer cold, heat, hunger, torture for her sake; but I would scorn, beggar as I am, to share her wealth with her; nor have I the heart to ask her to share my poverty with me, and yet, what does she mean? What did she mean to-night when she whispered to me at the piano, that true affection was the one pearl of great price, for which she would be willing to lay down rank and gold, and all the prizes of earth. There was a glitter in her dark eyes, as she spoke, which almost made me tremble; it looked like love one moment, like passionate love, in texture like mine; and the next instant I could have sworn that I read indignation and anger in the most beautiful face that ever looked into mine. She is a mystery, this exquisite Cathleen Lamotte. If she be indeed a coquette, as Arkwright says, what a cruel, finished, heartless, clever creature she must be."

After a time Earnshaw undressed and retired to rest. His dreams were of Cathleen.

In the morning he arose early, and went to that portion of the house which was devoted to the education and amusement of Master Albert Viner. There was already a bright fire burning in the large schoolroom, and to the surprise of Earnshaw he perceived his pupil already established before it, poring over a book of grammatical exercises.

"Why, Albert, you are up betimes this morning!" said Earnshaw.

Master Viner put down his book and held out his hand to his tutor.

"I want to get on early with my studies this week," said the boy; "next week will be taken up with the preparations for Christmas, and then I know you will give me some holidays, won't you, Mr. Earnshaw?"

"Yes, Albert; you have been attentive and industrious lately," said the young tutor.

"And I never thought I should be, if anyone came here to teach me," observed Master Viner, confidentially. "I used to be always at war with one or another before you came, but now I am nearly always at peace with the world. I like you, Mr. Earnshaw," continued Albert, with a boy's frankness, "that's about the truth of it, and I've been a better fellow since you came; it's just because you're

better than most others, I expect." Master Viner's boyish logic made Earnshaw smile. "We shall have capital sport out on the moors after the hares," pursued Master Viner; "and we are going to have theatricals, a ball, and such a-to-do, the house will be full of fine gentlemen, lovers of Madam Cathleen; there will be a fat parson, who wants her, and half-a-dozen officers from London, and Sir Random Racket, the wildest baronet in Christendom, and the old earl, with his false teeth and wig. What fun it will be to see her play off one against the other. I say, Mr. Earnshaw, don't you go and fall in love with her."

Had Albert been more observant he would have started at the sudden pallor which overspread the tutor's face.

"I should be sorry to have her making game of you," pursued unconscious Albert, "because you are my friend."

"And so, that is her character," thought Earnshaw to himself. "I will be watchful on my guard. I will show her, in some way, what contempt I feel for her coquetry, and yet—"

At this instant a light step sounded in the passage, and immediately Cathleen Lamotte, in the most charming of morning toilettes, entered the room.

Earnshaw bowed to her gravely, sadly. In spite of herself, she was struck with the mournful expression on his face. She fancied that she hated him most completely, and yet, she had some compassion when she saw his unhappy look.

"A very white world this morning, Mr. Earnshaw," she said, lightly, "the landscape lies out silent, and as Tennyson expresses it, 'dumb with snow.' You have a good fire though here in the school-room, I perceive." She advanced to the fire as she spoke, and extended her hands towards the blaze. "You take care of yourselves here, Mr. Earnshaw," continued Miss Lamotte, "and I think you specimens of male humanity always do contrive to take care of yourselves."

There was a mockery, a bitterness in her tone which startled Earnshaw.

"What does she mean?" he asked himself.

"Don't you think you do?" pursued Cathleen, looking at the tutor.

"What, Miss Lamotte?" asked Earnshaw.

"Take care of yourselves, first, and foremost; to the exclusion of every other consideration, to the exclusion of the happiness, interest, comfort, peace, of every other creature."

She pretended to laugh as she spoke, but there was a bitter inflexion in her voice, an angry sparkle in her eye, which perplexed Earnshaw.

"I hope that all our sex are not so base," he said, slowly.

"Base!" echoed Cathleen, with a laugh; "only natural, is it not, that one should look out for oneself? Self-preservation, Mr. Earnshaw, is the first law of nature. You obey that law, do you not?"

"In some degree," replied Earnshaw, hesitatingly.

"In some degree," said Cathleen, in a mimicking voice, and then she said, suddenly, "Mr. Earnshaw, I am going to tell you something."

Was she mocking, or mad? kind, loving, or enraged?—Earnshaw could not tell—he waited in intense anxiety for her next words.

(To be continued.)

JAPANESE TEA has hardly fulfilled the anticipations formed of it in the earlier years, and the trade in it has taken little development. The demand, such as it is, is almost entirely for American consumption. In 1867, 67,400 cwts. were shipped, principally to America. In 1865, the export was 74,000 cwts. Occasionally small shipments are made to England, but the market is uncertain, and the quality is evidently unsuited to the demands here.

PARLIAMENT AND THE SUNDAY OPENING OF THE PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS.—In 1855 and 1856 there were 75 members of Parliament who voted in favour of the proposal to open the British Museum, Crystal Palace, and similar institutions on Sundays. Of that number 23 have been returned to the present Parliament; 10 of the 75 members who held seats in the last Parliament have failed to secure seats in the present Parliament. There are 4 members out of the 15 composing the present Cabinet who voted in 1855 or 1856 for opening the British Museum and the Crystal Palace on Sundays, viz., Mr. Bright, Mr. Lowe, Mr. Bruce, and Mr. Chichester Fortescue, and there are two other gentlemen, Mr. Layard and Mr. J. A. Otway, holding office in the new Ministry, who favour the opening of places of amusement on Sundays.

ARCHBISHOPAL TRANSLATIONS.—We lately noticed the instances of Archbishops of York promoted to Canterbury. With reference to the promotion of Bishop Tait from London to the Primacy of all England, we may note the former similar translations from the metropolis to the greater archie-

piscopal province. Sudbury was the first, A. D. 1375; and then Courtenay, 1381; Warham, 1508; Bancroft, 1604; Abbot, 1611; Laud, 1633; Juxon, 1660; Sheldon, 1663; Howley, 1828; and Bishop Tait, the tenth and last, in five centuries. The first translation of a Bishop in the English Church was that of Gilbert Foliot, from Hereford to London, in 1163. Foliot died Bishop of London in 1188.

MICHEL-DEVER.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

THE brief month of happiness which Claire had allowed herself was drawing to a close. Thorne had devoted himself to her, and he seemed even more contented in this new phase of his life than he had been in that other honeymoon they had passed together so long ago. This was bitter to Claire, for, unreasonable as it was, she was jealous for that other self whose memory seemed so utterly indifferent to her husband.

If Thorne had betrayed any regret for his inconstancy, any sympathy for the forsaken one, she might have relented; but day by day he told her that never before had he loved—never before known what true happiness was.

When she ventured to refer to his first marriage, he refused to listen, sealing her lips with kisses and entreaties:

"Don't bring up that phantom to poison your faith in me, Claire. I was little more than a boy in those days, and the short-lived passion I felt for Claire was but a pale glimmer compared with that I cherish for you. You are the light of my life—the joy of my heart, and I ask no brighter lot than will be mine with your companionship."

"Short-lived passion!" repeated Claire; "is it true that you so soon ceased to love that hapless creature? Oh, Walter! this gives me a new and painful glimpse of your fickle nature."

"Don't speak in that tone, my darling. If I have been inconstant to one woman and harsh towards another, I will atone for it all by my unswerving devotion to you. Let the name of Claire be tabooed between us. It is not pleasant to me to recur to that episode in my verdant youth, and if I could I would gladly bury it in utter oblivion."

Claire bent her head down, and made no reply, but she felt her shiver as if with an ague, and she withdrew herself from his encircling arm. In some alarm, he asked:

"Are you ill, Claire? Why do you look so strangely? One would think that although you are my wife, you would be glad to have me regard that early escapade of mine, in a sentimental, rather than in a sensible manner. Claire is nothing, can be nothing to me, for her image faded from my heart years ago. The interest with which she once inspired me has long been dead, and if I had been foolish enough to wish to revive it, I do not think we could have been happy together. Years of bitter resentment on one side, and desertion on the other, could not easily have been condoned."

Thorne said this because he believed her to be jealous of those early memories. He thought she wished to probe his soul and satisfy herself that she really reigned supreme over the forsaken idol of his youth. He could have no clue to her real feelings, for he had never suspected her identity. There were moments in which she forcibly reminded him of his early love, but he attributed the resemblance to the tie of blood between them, which she had asserted, but that he had re-married his own wife had never once dawned on his mind. She recovered her composure, and said quietly:

"Your assurances satisfy me that your heart has utterly shaken off its early allegiance. I shall name Claire no more to you. It is unfortunate that she is not so indifferent to the memories of the past as you seem to be."

"That is a strange thing for you to say, Claire. I know that you love me, yet you speak as if you resent inconstancy to another. I wish I could understand you, for, at times, you are a strange riddle to me. You pique my curiosity, and I begin to wish to hear that life history you promised me before our marriage."

"I cannot give it to you this evening," she replied, with a forced laugh. "You shall soon know all my past—that is, all in which you can take any interest. Our guests may arrive at any moment, and between this time and May's marriage there will be no opportunity to dilate on my life experience. When that is over, you shall know all I have to tell."

"It will be but a week, and I can wait that time. I hear a carriage driving to the entrance now. But, Claire, remember one thing—nothing that you can have to reveal can change my feelings towards you. Even if you tell me that you adored that other man

who, Ada says, treated you badly, I will still cling to the belief that you now love me better than you ever loved him. I will show such tender care towards you, that you must place me in the highest place in your heart."

"No other has ever held so warm a place there as yourself," she impulsively replied. "Believe that, let what will happen."

"Why, what on earth can you apprehend, Clara? Nothing could touch me nearly but losing you and of that there can be no danger. We are both imperfect health—we are bound together by legal ties, cemented by affection, and I look forward to many years of happiness in your dear companionship."

"I scarcely know what I meant," she hurriedly replied. "A sad and brooding presentiment of evil has fallen on me, but I will shake it off. Come, we must not linger here, for I hear voices in the hall, and we must go to meet our friends."

In a few more moments they were in the midst of the group of travellers, and May threw her arms around her father's neck and kissed him more than once. He returned the caress, and then resigned her to her new mother, while he welcomed Mr. Balfour and his wife to Thornhill with that cordial grace which he could display towards those he really liked. While they all talked together a few moments, Mrs. Balfour keenly regarded the husband and wife, and she thought:

"It is all right at last; they have found the haven of content, and neither one will willingly forsake it again."

May took her two young friends to the room prepared for them, that they might remove their dusty travelling dresses and make a fresh toilette before dinner was served, Claire accompanied Mrs. Balfour to her apartment, leaving the two gentlemen together.

Ada threw aside her bonnet and mantle, and turning to Claire, eagerly asked:

"Have you told him all, Claire? Have you become perfectly reconciled to each other? Though of course you have, for I never saw Walter looking so well and so happy."

"I believe he is happy, but it is because he is still in the dark as to my past history. I have not told him, Ada; it is not my intention to reveal myself to him till I have perfectly re-established my old influence over him. I wished no cloud to cross our horizon for the first few weeks of our reunion, but after May is married and gone I shall tell him all."

"It would have been better to have had no concealment from the first; but you are a wilful woman, and must have your own way. You love Walter, or you would never have placed yourself in his power a second time, Claire, and to that love I trust for the solution of all your difficulties. Perhaps it was best to make him feel how necessary you are to him before you draw aside the curtain and show him the comedy you have played so successfully."

"That was my impression, but we have no time to talk of that now. In half-an-hour dinner will be on the table, and I will leave you to make such changes in your dress as you may wish. I will send a servant up to assist you."

Claire escaped from the room, and she took care to afford Mrs. Balfour no farther opportunity to question her in private during the days that intervened before the important one in which she would more fully understand the resentful and passionate nature she had vainly endeavoured to influence. Claire sustained her part so well—Thorne was so openly devoted to her, that both Mr. Balfour and his wife congratulated each other on the good understanding that seemed to exist between their host and hostess, and he said:

"I knew all would come right. When two people love each other as they do, nothing can keep them from being happy together. The revelation of her identity with the object of his first passion will fill Thorne with astonishment, but he will only feel that he has illustrated the truth of the French proverb, 'One always returns to his first love.'"

Thornhill had not yet been thrown open to the outside world, but on the night of May's marriage a large company was expected to be present. On that occasion Thorne intended to inaugurate the new style of life he intended to adopt; his house should henceforth be the centre of hospitality for the country, and with its brilliant mistress, he felt assured that no other would be able to rival it in attractiveness.

Claire apparently entered into all his plans for the social regeneration of the neighbourhood, but in reality she listened with a sad and pre-occupied heart. She would not hearken to the pleadings of conscience, which told her how wrong she was to cast the soul she might have redeemed from its worst faults down into the depths again, leaving it a prey to gloom and remorse. She would only listen to her own bitter sense of wrong, and harden herself in her

resolution to forsake him in the hour of his most supreme content, even as he had abandoned her.

On the evening before the bridal Sinclair arrived at L—, and after taking a room at the hotel, made a brief call at Thornhill. Dr. Brandon, who was enchanted with the turn affairs had taken, had met Mr. Thorne in a friendly manner, the latter ignoring the part he had taken in favour of the lovers; the good doctor and his family were among the expected guests, and few rejoiced more sincerely in the approaching union.

Sinclair was the bearer of a letter to Mrs. Thorne, which had been sent to him from London with injunctions to deliver it into her own hands. Claire was expecting this communication, and she went out to receive him as soon as she heard of his arrival.

The greeting between them was very friendly, and Sinclair said:

"I should not have intruded here this evening, Mrs. Thorne, but for the express command contained in Mr. Orme's note to place this letter in your hand as soon after my arrival as possible. As he said it was very important, I feared to entrust it to a messenger."

"Thank you; I looked for it from your own hand alone, and when I heard you were here, I knew the errand that brought you. Mr. Orme is a lawyer, and an old friend of mine. I trusted to him the settlement for May in lieu of the bank-stock she gave up to her father. If you will excuse me a moment, Mr. Sinclair, I will read what he says."

The young man bowed, and she glanced over the few lines written by Mr. Orme. They assured her that her instructions had been carried out, and that the whole sum paid him by Walter Thorne had been settled on his daughter. The requisite vouchers would be forwarded to Mr. Harry Sinclair within a week after his union with Miss Thorne.

As she replaced the missive in its envelope, she smiled brightly upon him, and said:

"It is all right, Mr. Sinclair. The temporary loan made by May to her father will bear good interest when it is repaid to her. I do not wish either you or her to cavil at the addition made to her fortune, for I assure you it will not be drawn from my own resources. I cannot explain now, but in a few days you will know how I came to have the control of this money, with both a legal and moral right to bestow it upon my husband's daughter as a dowry."

Sinclair smilingly replied:

"Few persons are inclined to cavil at good fortune, Mrs. Thorne. I am sure that I am every way your debtor, for if you had not played the part of the good fairy to May, she would never have gained her own consent to disobey her mother's injunctions."

"Do not speak of obligations to me, Mr. Sinclair; you owe me nothing, I assure you. Chance placed in my hands the power to serve both Mr. Thorne and his daughter, and I have availed myself of it. When you return to your own house you will find a package there containing a full explanation of the whole affair, and by that time you will understand my motives for maintaining the secrecy I have enjoined. Until you know all the bearings of the case, you must be as reticent as heretofore."

Claire earnestly regarded him, and he hastened to say:

"Of course I will obey you in the most minute particulars. Lawyers know how to keep secrets, you know."

She laughed, and replied:

"This is not a very important one, but it is my whim to have it faithfully guarded till I have given Mr. Thorne a surprise I have carefully prepared for him. Of course this visit was to me, as you could scarcely hope to see May this evening. But as a reward for bringing me such good news, I will tell you that she is walking in the grounds with Alice and Louise, and I do not object to allowing you to follow them."

Sinclair took the hint thus given, arose, thanked her warmly, and walked out in the direction of the old trysting place, where he found the three girls in the bower. After spending half-an-hour with them, he was peremptorily ordered by the trio to return to L—, by the lower gate, and to be seen no more at Thornhill till he came in state, attended by his groomsmen, to assume the responsibilities of a Benedict.

Alice and Louise were to be May's attendants, and two young friends of Sinclair were to wait upon him. The elder one, Charles Gardiner, was the only son of a wealthy merchant. He had been one of Alice's most devoted admirers. He accepted the invitation to act as groomsmen to his friend, with the determination to avail himself of the opportunity to press his own suit to his happy an ending as that of Sinclair's. We may as well state here that he did this successfully, though their union did not take place till a year later, as Mr. Balfour considered Alice too young to bestow her hand on her suitor, and her stepmother wished

her to see something more of society before she settled in life.

Golden October was in its prime, and the day of the marriage was one of its brightest. "Blessed is the bride the sun shines on." May repeated it to herself, and fully believed in its truth, for she had perfect faith in the man who from she was about to confide her whole future to.

Mrs. Benson had red her health, and her equanimity, though she was much upset by the marriage of her master, and the extinction of her own aspiring hopes. But she shook her head among her own particular griefs, and oracularly said:

"The new madams might fly, and uncommon perils. Mr. Thorne's lowly dignity by allers lettin' her have her own way, a thing as he never did afore to any one. But I won't last. He'll git tired o' playin' the debutant lover, and she'll cut up a tantrum afore long, as I put an end to the sickin' lovmakin' of two that is old enuff to know better. Mrs. Thorne ain't no childer, and he is nigh on to forty, though he don't look it."

Such was the consolation the housekeeper took to herself, unconscious how true a prophet she would prove, and of how terrible a nature the "tantrum" she predicted would be.

Alice and Louise, robed in pale blue tulle, looped with white roses, came first with their cavaliers; then the bride and groom, the former in white silk, over which was worn a robe of Brussels point, with a veil to match, fastened on with a wreath of orange-buds. This costly dress was a present from her stepmother, and the pearls that glittered on her arms and neck were the gift of her father.

It is the right of every happy bride to look lover on the occasion of her marriage than ever before, and many who had passed May by as a merely pretty girl, were surprised at the transformation made by her elegant and becoming attire. Yet the improvement was not alone due to this; the atmosphere of affectionate appreciation in which she had lately lived, had raised from her really bright nature the cloud which had so long depressed her spirits, and reflected its sombreness upon her expressive face. Her features now wore an expression of serene content, and confidence in the future, and all acknowledged that they had rarely seen a fairer, or more self-possessed bride. The marriage ceremony took place, and congratulations were offered not only to the newly-wedded pair, but also to the handsome host, and the beautiful woman beside him who so gracefully sustained herself in her new position. Mrs. Thorne attracted more observation and comment than any other present, and many speculated on the chances of happiness in the third union of the master of Thornhill, and wondered how long the present smiling aspect of affairs would continue. All agreed in attributing the change in his conduct towards his daughter to the influence of the new wife, and many were the hopes whispered among the guests that Claire would continue to rule the turbulent spirit of her husband for his own good.

Many shook their heads and doubted the result, for Walter Thorne was thought a "bad case" by his old neighbours, and they were of the opinion that this brilliant stranger had unwittingly entered into the lion's den, in which she would be sure to find the same fate which had overtaken her predecessors.

Claire sustained her part bravely—she was courteous and attentive to her guests, gay with the young, dignified with those of more mature age, and all united in the verdict that a more elegant, or attractive woman had never graced their provincial society.

Yet if any of those people could have looked into her heart, they would have been appalled by the struggle that was going on there. In this supreme crisis of her fate Claire felt as if it would be easier to die than to inflict the blow she meditated upon the husband she knew she loved with all the power of her passionate heart; yet she never for a moment wavered in her purpose. All her preparations had been secretly completed, and this night, amid the confusion of the departing guests, she meant to effect her escape from Thornhill, perhaps never to return.

She closed her heart to every relenting whisper by repeating to herself:

"He has said we could never be happy together if reunited, and I believe he spoke the truth. I will go and be far enough away to escape his reproaches when he learns the trick I have practised upon him. He may never forgive me—but if he does—if he seeks me, knowing who I am, I will not refuse to return to him."

At midnight a magnificent supper was served, and soon after it was over, the guests began to call for their carriages. At this crisis, the lady of the house disappeared, and her husband apologised for her sudden withdrawal by stating to his guests that Mrs. Thorne was suffering from a severe headache, and he hoped they would excuse her. He told them that Thornhill would henceforth redeem its reputation,



[BANISHED TILL THE WEDDING DAY.]

and become the seat of gaiety and hospitality, and his guests declared themselves so much charmed with the first entertainment, that they would gladly accept any future invitations extended to them.

It was nearly four o'clock in the morning before the house was again silent, and after walking through the deserted apartments, and seeing that the lights were extinguished by the sleepy servants, Thorne took his way to his own room, expecting to find Claire asleep.

To his surprise and consternation, he saw that the bed was unoccupied, and he looked into the dressing-room, thinking she might have lain down on the sofa till the noise and the confusion in the house had subsided. She was not there, and his heart began to beat tumultuously, and fears of he knew not what to assail him. He was about to ring the bell violently, when a letter addressed to himself caught his eye. It had been placed in a conspicuous spot upon a small table drawn up near the sofa; breathless with agitation and dread, he sunk down, tore it open, and by the light of the lamp which had been left burning in the room, he read the following words:

"When you read these lines and understand what I have to tell you, you will execrate your writer. That is why I fly from your presence, for I do not choose to hear myself reviled, for compassing by management, that justice which you would never of yourself have offered.

"I vainly appealed to you in favour of your repudiated wife—of her whose happiness was not alone destroyed, but her reputation attacked, and I made a vow to myself that I would bring home to you the retribution you merited, by deserting you in my turn, when your hopes of happiness were at their culminating point.

"Do you begin to comprehend the game I have played against you? or is it necessary for me to announce myself to you in my true character? I have marvelled at your blindness during the months of almost daily association which have passed since we last met. I know that time, and culture have greatly changed me from the impulsive child who won what you called your heart, but when I came hither to fascinate you anew, I had many fears that you would penetrate my incognito, and recoil from me, as I feel assured you would, had you known me as your long-deserted wife. The name I assumed was but a translation of the one that lawfully belonged to me, as you would have known if you had been more familiar with the French language.

"I have never forfeited my right to bear it, nor considered myself free to give my hand to another, although you took to your heart the rival you tem-

porarily deserted, that you might work me such woe as heaven nor man forgives.

"I vowed to reinstate myself in the eyes of the world. I waited through many years for the opportunity, and at last it came. How adroitly I availed myself of it you know, and to-morrow your dear 'five hundred friends' will also know that the master of Thornhill has re-married his first wife, to be forsaken by her in his turn. I have sent an article to the leading newspaper in L—, giving a brief account of this 'romance in real life,' that those who remember the shameful divorce trial, which cast me out upon the world with a tainted name, may know that the supposed paramour was your lawful wife and worthy to hold that position, or she would never have been elevated to it a second time.

"Your pride will suffer, and so, perhaps, will your heart, for now I believe that you truly love me. The boyish passion soon burned itself out, but that of the fully matured man will prove indelible, and thus I am avenged. All the tortures I have borne will come home to you, and for a season at least, you will feel the intolerable burden of a vacant and outraged heart.

"Through all the brilliant triumphs I have won in society, mine has lain like lead in my bosom, insensible to love, nursing but one strong passion, and that was the desire to bring home to you the sufferings you had inflicted on me.

"If, since our last meeting, you had shown any remorse, or even regret for the past, I might have relented towards you, and spared you this humiliation, in spite of my vow. But you plunged, with your usual selfish recklessness, into a violent passion for the supposed stranger, and refused to listen to my pleadings for myself. Though I left you to infer that your lost Rose would gladly renew the vows she had once plighted to you, you showed the most callous disregard to her wishes, and thought only of yourself. Had you been less hard, less egotistical, the result might have been very different. I should then have accepted the advice my best friend urged upon me, and have revealed myself to you in my true character, before our second union took place.

"It is too late now to speculate on what might have been; the hard, and repulsive fact stared us in the face that we have mutually outraged each other to that degree that the angel of conciliation can scarcely interpose, and bid us forgive, and forget the bitter past. I have from your own lips the assertion that if re-united, we could never be happy together, and that decided me at the last to consummate my vengeance for the treachery of which I was once the victim.

"You were right in your supposition that Andrew Courtney had transferred to me the bond he held against you; but you drew from that an inference most degrading to me when you expressed your belief that I wished to secure a portion of the wealth from which I had refused to accept a support in my hour of direst need.

"I have exacted the payment of that debt that I might provide suitably for the daughter you were willing to impoverish that you might retain your own estate intact. The whole sum paid over by you, has been settled on May so securely that, even if she wished it, she cannot return any portion of it to you. My first design was to force you to pay the whole of it yourself, but when I found her happiness could only be purchased by the sacrifice of her fortune, I induced her to give it to you in the shape of a loan, which I pledged myself to repay in a few weeks. She accepted my verbal assurance, glad to find a justifiable means of evading her promise to her mother, but she understood nothing of the means I intended to adopt to secure repayment. Your daughter is a gentle and affectionate creature, and she will love you very dearly if you will permit her to do so; but I fear that the bitterness of your heart will be poured out on her, and I rejoice that I have been instrumental in giving her a protector who will defend her from your wrath.

"Do not blame Mrs. Balfour for her apparent collusion with me. It is true that she was aware of my identity, but she had no right to betray it without my permission, and I allowed her to believe that after our honeymoon was over I would seek a perfect reconciliation with you. She has throughout vehemently opposed my course of action and pointed out to me clearly enough the possible misery that might arise from it. I did not hearken to her reasonings, for I had already made up my mind that our reunion could only be temporary, and to be submitted to on my own part for the attainment of the purpose which I had in view—to mete out to you what you had given to me.

"Our accounts are squared—I have bestowed on you one month of happiness in return for the one you gave me so long ago, and I bid you adieu. Several hours must intervene after my flight before it is discovered, and they will suffice to place me beyond your reach, even if you should desire to pursue me and force me to return to your house. After what I have told you, I scarcely think you will have the wish to proceed to such extreme measures, and I believe that I shall be allowed to go upon my way unsought and un molested. CLAUDE R. L. THORNE."

(To be continued.)



[FLAME RESCUING THE COUNTESS.]

THE FLOWER GIRL.

CHAPTER XXX.

WHILE Roger Vagram hurried to plot with the king, those of the inmates of Tempest House who have played their part in this story were exchanging histories of their lives, and that all may be clear, we will briefly record their words.

"My son," said Earl Henry to Sir Mortimer, "heaven has restored to me my beloved wife—"

"Rather say," interrupted Lady Mabel, as she embraced her long lost husband, "that heaven has restored you to me, my Ethelbert. Ah, I can never, never cease to call you by that dear name."

"I won you by that name," continued the earl, gently, "because I wished to be loved for myself and not because chance of birth had made me an earl. Nay, there was another reason. I feared this evil Roger Vagram, although he pretended to be my friend. Why should I not? At one time eleven lives, fresh and hale, stood between me and Roger Vagram—my life made the twelfth between him and the earldom. One by one I saw those lives sink into the grave. Some died in battle, some by disease, until my life alone remained to bar Sir Roger from my title and estates. Heaven knows how those lives were cut off, and I fear Roger Vagram knows it well also. A fear that I was to perish and leave my honoured title and family name to one whom I detested, made me resolve to marry secretly, taking precautions to baffle Sir Roger should I fall in battle or by treachery. You will remember, dear wife, that I gave you a packet, with instructions not to open it until you heard of my death?"

"Yes, my husband. But that packet fell, no doubt, into the hands of Sir Roger. The casket and its contents were upon my person when he and Siballa Thornbuck enticed me into the garden of our cottage at midnight—pretending that you were there, pursued by the Yorkists—and when they threw me into the river the casket accompanied me. But the packet, or any other paper, I never recovered."

"That packet contained all the proofs of the marriage of Mabel St. Orme to Henry De Ross, Earl De Montfort, with instructions warning you, in case a son should be born of our marriage, to guard him against the enmity of Sir Roger Vagram. Perhaps all is best as it is; for had you, my son, been known to exist, Vagram would, doubtless, have compassed your death ere you reached manhood. I have told you how it came about that I was immured in a dungeon for nearly twenty-three years, after hearing that my

bride had become the victim of Vagram. But how were you saved from the death he meditated, and how have you preserved the secret from him and the wretch Siballa Thornbuck?"

"The sorceress threw a sack over my head," replied the countess, "and my senses forsook me. When I recovered them I was in the river. No doubt the murderers imagined that I was already dead when they cast me in, and that I sank immediately, but the sudden shock revived me. I found myself in the rushing river, with something corded tightly around, and over my head. Fortunately the cord, though drawn painfully tight, was not around my neck, as the murderers no doubt believed, but was passed across my upper lip, else I should have been strangled by that alone. As I was plunged into the river I regained my senses, and while struggling, my hands grasped a floating log, to which I clung with all the strength of despair. For hours, it seemed to me, I was swept on by the furious torrent. At length, when my chilled hands seemed unable longer to retain their hold upon the log, a strong grasp lifted me from the water and placed me in a boat. The same friendly hand speedily freed my face and head from the sack, which till then had enveloped them, and the first sight I saw was the clouded sun high in the heavens. Thus I must have been for several hours in the river, and have floated many miles from the spot where the crime was committed."

"Poor Mabel," said the earl, kissing her cheek fondly, "what agonies you must have undergone through that terrible time."

"I never think of it without shuddering," continued the countess. "But I saw the clouded sun, and then my eyes rested upon the honest face of Nicholas Flame."

"Gallant heart! Ever faithful, ever serving me," said the earl, pressing the hand of the printer.

"Heaven guided my wits, my dear lord," said Nicholas. "It was just six weeks after the battle of Towton, when Roger Vagram and Siballa threw my lady into the stream. My wounds were healed by that time, and I was in the service of Vagram—disguised of course—for I was plotting how to carry off the chest which I had traced to Montfort palace. My eyes were ever watching the false earl, and I followed him secretly when he set forth upon that expedition which ended in the entrapping of my lady."

"Then you had not told her that it was said I was no more?"

"No, my lord, I had not the courage to do so," replied the printer. "As I said, I followed the false earl, and though I did not witness the cowardly deed, the night being very dark, I suspected that my lady

had been enticed from the cottage, led to the river, or carried thither and cast in, for as Vagram and Siballa passed near me in the darkness, I overheard him say, exultingly, 'My Countess De Montfort has a pleasant night for a bath.'"

"Now, may heaven grant that my foot shall yet rest upon the throat of vile Roger Vagram!" cried the earl.

"Heaven say amen to that, my lord," continued the printer. "My lady has been thrown into the river," thought I. 'At least let me try to rescue her.' I ran to the river's edge, where I knew I might find a boat of some kind, and after long search I did find one, thanks to fitful flashes of lightning. But the storm had become a tempest, and all night my boat was drifted helplessly upon the river. The sun rose at length, clouded and pale, and it was nearly noon when I discovered, not far ahead, a log floating with some object clinging to it. That object was my lady. I rescued her, and succeeded, after hard struggling against the torrent, in reaching the shore. We found hospitality in a small farm house, and there, two days after we reached it, was prematurely born Sir Mortimer, the son of Earl Henry and Lady Mabel. The infant lived and became strong, but I was forced to leave my lady and England soon after to escape the hate of Roger Vagram. Many years passed before we met again, during which time I was left for dead by the assassins of the false earl, and having recovered, became a printer, a showman, an astrologer, and anything at hand. Last year I met my lady, for the first time since the parting in England, and, though still a printer or a showman, as best suits me, I have done all I could to restore Sir Mortimer to his rights, and to recover the chest which we supposed to contain my lord's remains."

"Noble heart," said the earl, warmly "may the time be near when Henry De Ross can reward you as you deserve. But, dear wife, how went it with you, after the loss of your true and faithful friend, Nicholas?"

"I fled from England as soon as I was able, with my infant son," replied Lady Mabel, "and found refuge in France, where I had kind relatives. Our son grew to be a famous soldier, and gained the favour of the king, Louis XI., in whose service he was knighted, and gained considerable wealth."

"Did you never visit England during all those years?"

"Often; but with exceeding care, for fear of Roger Vagram. Always hoping to hear of Ethelbert Clair, for close-mouthed Nicholas never told me that Ethelbert Clair was a great earl."

"But he told me," said Sir Mortimer, "when we

met a year ago, and we deemed it well not to inform my mother until we could prove the marriage."

"And knowing all this, how noble of birth you were," sighed Lauretta, "you desired to wed one who was, for all you or she could tell, a nameless, penniless orphan."

"For yourself I loved you, my Lauretta," replied the knight, "and for yourself I love you now, and for yourself I will love you for ever."

The happy lovers embraced in their delight, and Lauretta was about to speak of her past life, when old Tom Bell entered the library, expostulating in a loud voice with some one who had forced his way into Tempest House, and was following him closely.

"Bad blows the wind that drifts you here!" were the words of the old servitor, as he walked into the library.

"I say you are an old idiot! I must speak with the baron," replied a voice, which was instantly recognised by Sir Albert, and the next moment Sir Barton Woolfort staggered into the library.

Earl Henry was not recognised by him, nor did the earl know Sir Barton; but the baron and Sir Mortimer instantly drew their swords as this well-known supporter of the false earl recoiled in.

"Fehaw! gentlemen—would you fight a dying man?" said Sir Barton, as he sank upon one knee from exhaustion. "I am well nigh spent, Sir Albert; and though that gentleman wears my dress, I recognise him as Sir Mortimer Du Vane, who wounded me. Sir Mortimer, I made a vow to cease sword with you ere I spoke again to man, woman, or child; but, were all the broken vows of Barton Woolfort heaped into one pile, no church in England would be greater. Let me do one good deed before I die. All here are in fearful peril even while I speak, for Roger Vagram is now with the king, pleading for an order for the arrest of all he may find in Tempest House. But Roger Vagram means slaughter, and not arrest. Why, you know better than I can tell you. I overheard him and his mother plotting bravely for your destruction."

"His mother!" exclaimed Sir Albert, as he assisted the feeble knight to a large chair.

"Aye, his mother, Sir Albert. Siballa, the sorceress is the mother of Roger Vagram. The flower girl, they said, is daughter of the baron there, and so, I judge, is the little girl. You, Sir Mortimer—but I imagine you know who you are, without aid from me. Hasten! Get you gone from this house, from London, aye, from England; for Roger Vagram plots to slay you all, and even now he and his cut-throats may be spurring hither. Heaven have mercy upon me—I am gone!"

Sir Barton Woolfort spoke no more, but with a great groan of agony, writhed in his chair, and ere the baron could catch him in his arms, fell heavily upon the floor.

"He is dead; but his warning is with us," said Sir Mortimer, quickly. "We must disperse, to meet at the house of William Caxton, where we will agree upon measures of flight from England. There is no time to be lost. Your ladyship has still the packet of Richmond's letters?"

"It is in my bosom still, Sir Mortimer," replied Lady Tempest.

"They must be delivered to Master Caxton, even if we perish," continued Sir Mortimer. "The welfare of England is locked up in those letters. Earl Henry, will you with me? Haste, my friend, and put on what disguise you can. Then leave Tempest House one by one, as secretly as may be. Little Flydilla—"

"I will care for her," said Andrew Turl, "and for Mistress Lauretta too, if I may be trusted."

"We will trust you, good old man," said Lauretta, warmly.

Within less than a quarter-of-an-hour all had left Tempest House, except old Thomas Bell, who insisted upon remaining to meet and delay the movements of Roger Vagram.

Roger Vagram found it no easy matter to gain an early audience with King Richard, when he reached the royal palace.

The king had retired to his couch at a very late hour, after peremptory orders that he should not be disturbed until long after sunrise, and not then, unless he summoned his attendants.

So the false earl was forced to fume and fret for three long hours in the audience ante-chamber, waiting for King Richard to call his attendants.

Long before he saw the king, the spies of his enemies had their eyes upon his movements, and the leaders of the great conspiracy knew that the safety of Henry Tudor's friends was in peril.

So it was high noon before Roger Vagram rode away from the royal palace towards his own, with an order for the arrest of those whom he hated.

"Curse this delay," he mused, as he spurred his horse. "Better if I had slain them all, and afterwards made what tale I could to satisfy the king.

My old daring was lacking in this. Bah! I took a woman's advice instead of my own. Still, they may yet be at Tempest House—must be in London; and I will find them surely."

But on his way a party of ruffians met and unhorsed him, and then they scattered here and there, leaving him senseless in the mire, so that it was almost sunset when Roger Vagram, sore and battered, encircled Tempest House with his guards and demanded instant admission.

"Come in, my lord," said old Thomas Bell, readily, for he had been all day expecting the demand. "Sorry am I that the noble baron and his lady are not here to meet your lordship. But at an early hour this morning my lord and lady, with Sir Mortimer Du Vane and others, set forth for the north of England—"

"Rascal! you are lying!" "I! Not so, my lord. A knight, Sir Barton Woolfort, brought them some tidings which made them hasten to leave London."

"Sir Barton Woolfort! So!—he has been missed from my palace," said the false earl, angrily. "So he, too, as well as Andrew Turl, has played the traitor. Went Sir Barton with them?"

"Not he, my lord, for he died as he delivered his tidings, and now lies in the baron's library, while we await the coroner."

"I see," muttered Roger Vagram. "He was not delirious, nor did he drink the wine as Siballa believed. He overheard all and in his rage betrayed. Still, I will look upon him."

The house was keenly searched, but Roger Vagram found none of his enemies or desired victims there, and he returned to De Montfort palace to issue orders in the name of the king for the arrest of the fugitives, wherever they might be found in England.

While the emissaries of the false earl searched in every direction, he hastened to lay before the king the unwelcome intelligence that the baron and baroness, with Sir Mortimer Du Vane, were nowhere to be found.

His tidings were startling to the suspicious monarch, who saw in this fact that his fears of a deep-laid conspiracy were just.

His wrath was greatly excited, too, from the ill-fortune of those whom he had commissioned to slay Sir Mortimer the preceding night, so that he entered eagerly into every measure which might lead to the capture of so formidable an adversary.

His power and cunning were added to those of Roger Vagram, and great rewards were offered for the capture of the fugitives.

Meanwhile the sorceress was not idle, and used her snake-like cunning in trying to trace the retreat of those she hated.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE sorceress, after having discovered that the occupants of Holly Cottage had departed from their abode before daylight, returned at once to De Montfort palace, where she remained until Roger Vagram set forth upon his fruitless expedition against Tempest House.

While her son was absent, Siballa resolved to inspect the remains in the chest more closely than she had already done.

"I was in a hurry and a fright, besides I had taken too much wine for my good. I'll take the chance I have to look again. How came the skeleton of a woman in that chest? that is what puzzles me. Who was she? And that puzzles me more. I'll go and take a peep, for I think I saw some jewels on the bones."

She passed through the various halls of the palace unquestioned, for the household feared while they detested her, and all knew, though not why, that Roger Vagram held her in high regard.

On her way to the walled-up room she looked into the one which contained the body of Sir Simon.

"He is gone," she mused, as she gazed for a moment upon the rigid form and pale face. "Well, Roger will take it hard when he has time to grieve. I never liked the youth, for he always treated me with disrespect. Still, he was my grandson, and I am sorry he is gone so soon."

With this slight tribute to the dead, she took up one of the tall waxen candles burning near the body, and moved away towards the room which contained the osseous chest.

"Yes, they are jewels, rare and costly," she muttered, as she examined the necklace, zone, and bracelets of the skeleton. "I'll take good care that nobody gets them. Roger is growing very stingy, and some day, I fear, he may defy me and bid me starve. Come to think of it, he could do it now, and I can prove nothing against him. Who would believe my word pitted against an earl? Let me make hay while the sun shines."

One by one she concealed the various ornaments in her long leathern pouch, and then laughed aloud in her glee.

The laugh was harshly echoed or mocked by something peering at her from the pit of the trap-door.

She turned around quickly and recoiled, full of terror, as she beheld a hideous, hairy face glaring at her from a pair of shining eyes.

"It is the evil one!" cried the sorceress, falling upon her knees, and rapidly repeating an exorcism. "No, it is the ape! It is Barab!" she added as the animal leaped into the room. "Now how came Barab here, in De Montfort palace?"

"Ha! have I found you, sister?" croaked the hoarse voice of Callisa, as that wretch stared across the pit at the amazed sorceress.

"Is it you? What do you want here?" asked Siballa.

"My ape, our lad Barab. He got loose last night and went into the tapestried chamber. It was well for the flower girl that she had escaped, though how she did it is a mystery to me. Barab went into the tapestried chamber, and finding no one there, opened the hall door. He then came to me, but I was blind from the blow of that mix, and so he escaped from the house. This morning, as my eyes were better, though my face is still horribly swollen, I set out to find my ape. What have you in that pouch?"

"Pouch stones," replied the sorceress, not at all pleased by the intrusion. "How found you the ape?"

"It took time, but an ape, especially a noble fellow like Barab, is not often seen in the streets and on the house-tops of London, so I easily traced his wanderings to De Montfort palace. If those things I saw you put in the pouch are pouch stones they are very queer ones, old woman, for I saw them shine and sparkle."

"Hold your tongue! Now, after you had traced Barab to the palace, did you know he was here?"

"Very readily, my lass," replied Callisa. "Having learned that he had been seen entering a window in the rear, I asked after him, and the servants said they thought my darling Barab was the evil one gone to look for his dam, and so told me you were in the haunted wing. But what is that? The chest I have heard you mutter about?"

"Ha! did you ever hear me say anything about that?" asked Siballa, quickly.

"About that, indeed! Come, you and Roger Vagram have thought Callisa Slaver a fool long enough!"

The sorceress, surprised and startled by her sister's words, stared at her keenly for a moment, and then set her teeth hard together, muttering:

"Now I see that she knows too much."

"Why, woman," continued Callisa, while her eyes sparkled through their livid and swollen lids, "the body of Earl Henry is in that chest."

"Look and see," was the curt rejoinder of the sorceress.

Barab, in the meantime, had examined the contents of the chest, chattering and growling as he tossed the bones about in the bottom of the box.

"Barab!" cried the sorceress, as Callisa advanced towards the chest.

The intelligent animal, though accustomed to obey Callisa, knew well that Siballa was superior to her, and that he was not to regard the orders of the former when the sorceress spoke against them.

He sprang from the chest and crouched submissively at the feet of Siballa. Callisa's eyes were fixed upon the contents of the chest, and therefore she did not see the suspicious gestures which her evil sister made to Barab, or she would have comprehended her peril at once.

The sorceress, whose skill in taming and instructing birds, reptiles, and quadrupeds was the chief cause of her success in her deceptive trade, having fixed the active attention of the huge ape, pointed first at Callisa, then at the pit beyond the door, and finished by tapping herself upon the tongue and holding up her forefinger.

Barab perfectly understood this rapid pantomime, which meant:

"Barab, you must throw that woman into the pit, but not until I speak and show this finger."

Understanding his order, the ape stole aside and flashed his small, malignant eyes alternately and with lightning-like rapidity from one mistress to the other. "Ha!" cried Callisa. "This is not the skeleton of a man, but of a woman. Where is the body of the earl? I have overheard you and my nephew speak of it."

"Your nephew?"

"Yes, your son, Roger Vagram, Earl De Montfort."

"So you have found that secret out, my dear sister?"

"Indeed have I, and many others, my darling, cunning Siballa," replied Callisa, snapping her fingers exultingly. "It is time I made money by my knowledge. You have always kept me down; but yesterday week, my dear, you told it all by pieces, and I readily put this and that together, and so made out the whole."

"What else did you make out, my sister?" asked the sorceress, in a tone of feigned humility and fear.

"That the flower girl, Lauretta, is the daughter of Sir Albert Tempest."

"Oh! Listen to her!"

"I know it is true," said Callisa. "I know all about it. You and Roger Vagram—who ought to be really ashamed of himself for permitting his mother's sister to toil for a scanty livelihood, and he so rich and great—you and he stole the girl when she was an infant, and put her into the care of Martha Mansfield—"

"Who?" exclaimed the startled sorceress.

"Dame Martha Mansfield, a reduced and unfortunate gentlewoman, over whom you and Roger Vagram had some powerful influence. She kept the child in France for years, then settled with her in a little English village, passing Lauretta off as her niece, but educating her to be a lady."

"How did you find all that out?"

"From you, when you were tipsy, my sister dear," sneered Callisa. "I learned to-day, while I traced Barab, that the flower girl, Lauretta, was the child you stole, and whom Dame Martha Mansfield reared so privately."

"From whom?"

"Wait and I will tell you," replied Callisa, greatly elated by the apparent dismay of her sister, who had for so many years ruled her with a rod of iron, and claimed two-thirds of all their wicked gains. "Last December you and Roger Vagram forced Dame Mansfield, whose life was in your power, to leave the little village where she had dwelt for ten years, and move to another one. Not a month ago you made the dame propose to Lauretta to come to London as a ballet-singer, for you wished Sir Simon to fall in love with her; or, perhaps, you intended to make money by her, if Roger Vagram's plan to have Sir Simon fall in love with her failed. Roger, you know, hates Lady Tempest, as he hates her husband. If Sir Simon, who, I hear, is dead, had suspected a trap to marry him was afoot, he would never have looked at the supposed flower girl."

"Perhaps not. At least so his father thought. But who told you this?"

"Dame Mansfield."

"What! Bah! Martha Mansfield is dead!" said the sorceress.

"Don't you wish she was!" replied Callisa, sneering. "She is not the only one, I can tell you, who has escaped your hands. I have more than once, perhaps."

"You will never boast of that again," thought the sorceress.

"I tell you I conversed with Dame Martha Mansfield this very day, and she is now at my house."

"Ah, she is now at your house?" repeated Sibilla. "What for?"

"To denounce you and Roger Vagram, if you do not agree to pay her and me well for holding our tongues. She didn't die by the roadside, as you thought she would, when you she were forcing the flower-girl to come to London. She didn't want to die. She would have died if she had used the medicine you gave her. But she crawled to a house, and after a long sickness has made her way to London, to find Sir Albert Tempest and claim his protection. She started to run when I met her, but I soon had my hands on her, and led her to my house, where I scared the secret from her—you see, I already had heard something of it from you. Ha! what a fool you are to drink wine when your tongue is such a traitor!"

"Callisa, you say she is at your house?"

"Yes, for I told her we could make as much money out of Roger Vagram as out of the baron, who might have us both hanged for our pains. So we have concluded to see what you and Roger Vagram are willing to do before we try the baron."

"You always were a simpleton," said the wily sorceress. "Why share with Dame Mansfield? She is at your house—let her never get away to tell anybody."

"How could I prove anything without her? If it wasn't for that I'd soon put her to rest—that is, if you and Roger Vagram will share what you two enjoy with me and pay me well for stopping her tongue."

"Agreed. I know my son, the earl, will consent, and if he does not we can very soon make him. Come, let us hasten to your house and settle matters with Martha Mansfield."

"No, I must have the agreement all in the earl's handwriting," said Callisa.

"Well, the earl will soon return to the palace. Let us go to his private chamber and wait for him."

(To be continued.)

STREET ACCIDENTS.—During the year 1888 the deaths of 203 persons resulted from horse or carriage accidents in the streets of London; 65 of these occurred to children under ten years of age, and 120 to adults. Injury from horses caused 7, omnibuses 12,

cabs 21, vans or waggons 45, drays 7, carts 53, and other vehicles not described 58 deaths. To the Registrar-General's inquiry whether heavy waggons and the like should be allowed to be driven as recklessly as they are now in the streets of London, we have no hesitation in saying, "No," nor light ones either. At present, drivers are, as a rule, not only sublimely indifferent to the fate of pedestrians who may happen to cross their path, but are equally careless about collisions with their vehicles.

AN OLD HABIT.

"LYDIA, what makes you look so sober? Mercy! you haven't hardly opened your lips since we left Mr. Barbour's. What is it?—anything I've done?"

Charles Murphy and his wife had just entered their own cosy, comfortable home, after having spent an evening at a party given by one of their friends and neighbours—a party which had been the scene of all sorts of social enjoyment, and to which only select and congenial spirits had been invited. And our friend Murphy seemed to be just the sort to enjoy such social occasions. Young—Charles only thirty, while Lydia was two years younger—both of them handsome, intelligent, and universally respected and beloved—and then Lydia's younger sister had come to live with her, and into the hands of this sister she could confide the care of her children with perfect assurance—assurance of love, good-will, and desire to please; on both sides—for the little ones loved their youthful aunt dearly.

And yet Lydia Murphy had come home from Mrs. Barbour's pleasant party with a very long, and even sad face.

"Lydia, is it anything I have done?"

"Oh, Charles, you may think me foolish—you may think I am over sensitive; but I cannot help it. When my feelings are hurt I suffer pain. It is not in my power to hide it. And you are always correcting me in public, and contradicting what I say, and making me feel so ashamed!"

Mrs. Murphy took a seat by the well-filled grate as she spoke, and covered her eyes with her handkerchief.

"Well, well—I'll try, Lydia, and see if I can break myself of the habit that gives you so much trouble. I'll try, certainly."

"Oh, thank you, Charles! Do try! Try as hard as you can—I know you will."

After this they talked over the affairs of the party, and at length Lydia asked her husband concerning his prospect with Mr. Oakes. She approached the matter very timidly, for she seldom questioned her husband about his business matters, Charles brightened up in a moment.

"Ah!" he cried, "I am just as good as sure of the place. I saw Mr. Oakes' head man to-day, and he told me that the old gentleman—not so very old—only fifty—but that's what they call him—remarked to him on the previous evening that I was just the man for him; he felt confident. It is a responsible place—chief book-keeper and confidential business agent of so wealthy a merchant. You see, there may be times when a man in Mr. Robert Oakes' place would hardly have his left hand know what his right hand doeth. Take it when he is buying heavily in grain; when he is preparing to sell; when he is about to throw stock into the market; or when he is going to buy it in. And yet his confidential book-keeper must know all this. Ah, it is a great place, Lydia; and the pay is grand—the best salary I know of in ordinary business."

"Oh, I hope you will get it, Charles."

"Never fear, love. All looks bright now.—What! past one? This won't do. We've got to get up in the morning."

An old habit freely indulged in is a strong thing. For some days no twain could be more happy than were Charles and Lydia Murphy. The husband was careful in the use of speech; found no fault; and allowed his wife to converse freely with her sister without interposing any of his corrections.

A week passed away. On Thursday evening Mr. and Mrs. Channoy Raynor "were at home to receive their friends"; and among those friends were Charles and Lydia Murphy. It was a brilliant scene, and a happy, joyous occasion; and during the early part of the evening Lydia Murphy was among the happiest of the happy.

It was towards ten o'clock; there had been music vocal, and music instrumental, until the company wanted no more; but rather sought repose in conversation. In one corner were assembled, without the least pre-arrangement, eight or ten individuals, and among them were the "big ones" of the occasion, besides one or two not quite so big. The host was there; Mr. Robert Oakes was there; the principal of the Academy was there; and so were the old physician

and the gray-haired clergyman. And Lydia Murphy was of the number, Mr. Raynor, the host, having led her from the piano.

After a time Lydia was led to make the remark, that she had been brought up on a farm; and when asked how she had liked the life, she answered promptly and frankly that the days of her childhood had been to her most joyous ones. And at length, being encouraged by the earnest questions of her listeners, she gave a glowing picture of farm life, where a united family are peacefully settled upon a farm, sufficient in size and capacity for the meeting of their wants. The words were simple; there was no attempt at fancy sketching; but only a plain, heart-felt, interesting story of domestic ups and downs.

"As for education," she said, "we had every advantage we could have desired. There were six children of us—three boys, and three girls; three upon the farm, and three in the dairy, so that we could assist each other as we pleased. We could do all our own work, and yet I venture to say, find far more time for study and mental culture than those find who have nothing else to do. Our labours did not fatigue us; and yet our books gave us rest therefrom."

"Of the six children which had the advantage of the eldest—the farm, or the dairy?" asked Mr. Preston, the pedagogue.

"The eldest was a girl—a sister four years older than myself."

"How's that?" abruptly inquired Charles Murphy, who had just come up and joined the group.

"Mr. Preston asked me, concerning the six brothers and sisters of us who lived on the old farm, whether a son or a daughter were the eldest; and I told him that the dairy had the advantage, as a sister, four years older than myself, was the eldest."

"Why, what are you thinking of, Lydia?" cried Charles, with elevated eyebrows. His wife had made a curious blunder, and he must set her right. "Do you forget your brother Clarence? Was not he the eldest of the family?"

"But my husband," pleaded Lydia, in piteous, painful tones, "we were speaking only of those who had been inmates of the old home—who had been born upon the farm."

"And wasn't Clarence all that? Didn't he live at home until almost a man grown?"

Lydia Murphy bowed her head a little while; and more than once her handkerchief was drawn across her eyes. At length she looked up, with a strange light upon her face—a frank, truthful light, and yet quivering and fearing, as though the fire that gave it birth burned fitfully.

"My friends," she said, "you will pardon me, I know, when I assure you that I had no intention of deceiving you. The brother to whom my husband refers was a poor, unfortunate, and unhappy wail. Almost from the hour that sent him forth to play in the streets with his companions he conceived a liking for strong drink. The appetite was fastened upon him in his early boyhood, and it grew with his growth, and strengthened with the lapse of time. All kindness that loving hearts could yield was given unto him; forbearance was extended until it almost became a crime; tears, prayers, entreaties—all, all failed. He was a wanderer to and fro, counting the old roof-tree his home, until he reached the age of sixteen; but he never was one with us in our labours, or in our studies. He went away at length—and he is now at rest. Heaven grant that his sufferings here were sufficient. We loved him; and in his few lucid moments he loved us. Yet he was not of us as we regard our peaceful and happy united household. I think you will now understand why I omitted Clarence's name; I think you will also sympathize with me in my sisterly instinct to throw the veil of oblivion over his unhappy life."

She was in tears when she closed; and her husband, who realised what a senseless, foolish thing he had done, sought to offer an explanation; but the group broke up without giving him a hearing, Mr. Raynor still retaining Lydia's arm.

It was very near midnight when the guests began to depart; and among the first to go were Charles Murphy and his wife. On their way home in the coach not a word was said upon the subject of the unpleasant passage; and when they had reached their home, Lydia avoided it by speaking freely and even pleasantly upon other topics. She saw that her husband was nervous and uneasy, and she hoped that silent meditation on his part would effect more for her than anything she could say or do.

More than once on the following morning Charles thought to speak of his fault of the evening before; but he could not bring himself to the humiliating task, and he allowed it to pass; but he was far from happy.

Rather later than usual he went to his office, where he had, for the past six years, earned a respectable livelihood by copying; translating French, German

and Italian into English; and also in engrossing upon parchment—or in filling out parchment deeds, diplomas, and blanks of every description. And this last item of business had come to be the chief source of his income; for he was an exquisite penman, and long use in manipulating with his pen upon parchment had brought him to such a degree of perfection, that the tracings of his pen were not to be outdone by any steel or copper-plate.

At eleven o'clock the post-boy brought in the letters. One was from Mr. Robert Oakes, and he opened it first. And this was what he read:

"SPRING HILL COTTAGE, Dec. 10th, 18—.

"MR. CHARLES MURPHY.—You may not have expected a final answer so soon; but seeing that my business is fixed in my own mind, I have a mind to let you know my determination at once.

"I shall not require your services. My old and faithful and long-tried servant, Johnson, will serve me in this higher capacity. He shrunk from it at first, but has lately consented.

"Trusting that my decision will bring you no lasting disappointment, and holding myself ready to assist you at any time when such result is within my power, I am yours truly,
ROBERT OAKES.

"TO CHARLES MURPHY, ESQ."

Charles sat with the letter in his hand, struggling to keep back the hot tears of disappointment that welled up in spite of him, when his best and dearest friend, Tom Marshall, entered the office.

A little small talk, and then Marshall said:

"Charley, have you heard from Mr. Oakes yet?"

"Yes," burst from Murphy's lips. "He gives me the—He—don't want me!"

"So I had heard."

"You? How?"

"Look ye, Charley: I believe I am your true friend; and as such I shall tell you the truth. It will be painful; it will cut you to the quick; but never fear. Only myself and Mr. Johnson know it besides Oakes; and I can assure you that none others save yourself need ever know it. You remember how you arraigned your wife last night when she was giving a picture of her old rural home. Her hearers had become perfectly charmed with the sweet sketch she was giving them, and among her most ardent sympathisers was Mr. Oakes. When you broke in, and forced her, needlessly, and almost unfeelingly, simply at the beck of an evil habit, to tear open an old domestic wound, and tell the story of a brother's shame, you cast a pall upon the pleasant spell, and dissipated every ray of sunshine.

"And, Charley, though Mr. Oakes had fully made up his mind to engage you, yet that event was sufficient to turn him from his purpose. He said to me, this very morning—and he told me that I might inform you if I pleased—that he dared not place such a trust as was involved in the office he had proposed to give to you, in the hands of a man who had no more control over his sense and judgment than was manifest in your strange and uncalled-for, as well as unfeeling and unkind, correcting of your priceless wife, to her shame and mortification, in the presence of company.

"Forgive me, Charley, if I have hurt you; but, really, I thought you had better know the truth."

"It's all right, Tom—it's all right. Here's my hand on it. I'm glad you've told me. Don't mind these tears—I can't help it. I—I—bless me if I don't think I'd have done just as Oakes has done if I'd been in his place. I was a dolt!"

That very night Charles Murphy told to his wife the whole story, keeping back not a single thing. She wept upon his neck; she blamed herself; she declared that it was all her fault; and there is no knowing what she might not have taken to herself, had not her husband drawn her to his bosom and earnestly said:

"No, no, my best and most blessed of helpmates, you must not talk so. The result came of my own fault; I might almost call it a sin. Aye—it was a social and domestic sin; and it has entailed only unhappiness upon us. If heaven gives me strength, Lydia, I will cast that sin away now and for ever. Kiss me!—There—I think I am stronger than I have been before for many a year. Can it be the casting away of this fault that makes me so?"

"Why not?" returned the wife. "It is your only fault; and surely the man who has firmly resolved to go forth into the world without willing fault must be strong."

Time passed on. Through the winter Charles had more parchment work than ever before—so much that he often worked until one o'clock in the morning. He made money and he saved it; and since he and his wife had come to dwell in a realm of pure joy and truth—of happy trust and confiding love—since this they worked together; so that, when the summer came, Charles was able to raise money enough to go in with Thomas Marshall and buy the new paper-mill, which had been lying idle all winter because of the

dishonesty and incompetency of the party who put it up. But it was a grand piece of property, on a most excellent water-power, with hill-side springs of pure water in abundance, for washing and cleansing stock and pulp; and in time Mr. Charles Murphy was among the "heavy men."

But that was nothing as compared with the man at home—the man happy, peaceful, and able to find calm and tranquil repose in the loving atmosphere that pervaded his domestic realm.
S. C. J.

LUCK.

THE word "luck" is too firmly bedded in our language, and belief in the fact expressed by it is too strong to justify an expectation that it will soon become obsolete. Luck is an event, good or bad, which befalls a man independently of his own volition. If a man work all day for five shillings, his wages is not considered luck. But if he finds five shillings in the road, that is luck.

If a man aims at an accommodation train, but hits an express train, which has been delayed a little, he is in luck. He has secured what he did not plan for.

Of the fact itself there can be no doubt. Many disappointments befall men which seem to have no relation to their own agency. Many pieces of good fortune occur which the recipient did not plan, or look for.

But the cause of luck, thus defined, is another thing. If we could look into men's minds and render clear those obscure and nebulous thoughts that hover there, it would be found, probably, that very different notions are entertained about it. Some believe that there are spirits, or sprites, whose power intercalates these events upon the calendar of Nature. Others seem to believe that in the vast realm of Nature events are floating about, like motes in sunbeams, and that men accidentally stumble upon them.

But dismissing all these notions, there are several pieces of general good or ill luck, which have much to do with the special luck that befalls men. I count it a piece of prime and admirable luck to be born of parents who had sound physical constitutions, ample brains, well-proportioned and balanced, living in moderately prosperous circumstances. Next to this, it is to be brought up in simplicity, among people kind and just, and under circumstances which require one to exert himself actively, so that he shall never expect to have anything which he does not himself earn. Lastly, and as a consequence of these, it is supreme good luck to have a patient nature, too proud to do evil, and not proud enough to take offence at the common experiences of life; as contented as is consistent with enterprise, and above all, with unwavering good nature.

This last quality—good nature—is perhaps the most desirable of all, in so far as happiness is concerned. Everyone knows that it is the sugar in fruit that gives it its palatableness, and that converts its juices into wine. Good nature is to human dispositions what sugar is to grapes.

A robust and cheerful nature hardly knows the difference between good and bad luck. Some things, which extort piteous complaints of bad luck from his neighbours, befall him without exciting more than a moment's attention—just as a healthy man does not feel a chilly gust which sets an invalid into shivers.

Ill luck in petty affairs is only another name for want of foresight, unskillfulness, poor judgment, clumsy-handedness, lack of spring and enterprise. Few men are willing to say that their own blunders, negative or positive, return upon their own heads. Luck is to them a fortunate word. Luck is a word that hides a man's inefficiency from himself, and saves his pride.

A good man, in good health, engaged in business for which he is fitted, and contented, will always be in luck.

Poor luck goes with slender judgment, with indolence, with supersensitive pride, with indigestion, with torpid livers, with heedlessness, and stupidity.

As all of us have flecks and tints of all these elements, at times, so we all of us have our share of bad luck. The height of ill luck is to be born badly, to live badly, and to die badly.

Let every man blame himself for all his bad luck, and he will find a cure for more than half of it. The rest is imaginary.
H. W. B.

HAIR DYES.—A great deal has been written about hair lately, but always treating it as though it had no more intimate connexion with the human body than the seaweed has to the stone to which it clings. We are told how we may dye our hair black, blue, green, or red; and a few courageous individuals have not been afraid to submit their hair to the operation of the different liquids necessary to change it from one colour to another. The vagaries of fashion are so

strange and so little under the control of good taste that it would not be safe to say that there may not be a run on the green as well as on the red; but it is evident that the great bulk of those who dye their hair will be people whose hair is of no colour at all, and these are just the people who are likely to suffer most by the practice, and for reasons which will presently be stated. Most people are aware that a hair is a hollow tube, of itself colourless, but presenting a black, brown, or red appearance, according to the colour of the substance with which it is filled. We are farther told that the hair is porous, and that the colouring fluid enters by these pores. Now, supposing the hair to be without colour—in other words, to have become white—it is because there is a cessation of the secretion of the colouring matter; the tube is, in fact, empty. If, then, a fluid is used to give it a colour, which contains poisonous ingredients, it is evident that this poison would not only be absorbed by the skin, but the hair would constitute myriads of ducts to convey the poison through the scalp. Some of these liquids appear harmless enough, though the changes they cause when mixed with others are so extraordinary, that no man can say what effect they might produce if they were carried into the blood. But some of the hair dyes that have been specified are positive poisons, and poisons, too, of a most virulent character. Of these, preparations of lead and mercury are the most dangerous, though they are by no means the only ones that enter into the composition of hair dyes; and what adds to the danger of using them is that they are not eliminated from the system in the course of the circulation, but, on the contrary, they accumulate, and must eventually be productive of great and serious evils. If people must use hair dyes, let them carefully avoid such as contain mineral substances; there may or may not be danger in the employment of vegetable extracts, but there is no doubt at all about the mineral.

THE ANTIQUITIES OF PARIS.

THERE is sad work going on amongst the relics of old Paris. The Paris correspondent of the *Telegraph* relates a circumstance to illustrate this. M. Récapé, a well-known amateur and dealer in works of art and *ébri*, having heard that a considerable quantity of carved wood had been sold as rubbish, hurried to the spot. One glance at the confused heap in a corner of the yard was enough for M. Récapé. The contractor asked 1,200 francs for the lot, and the amateur paid the money down. On examination, this huge pile of firewood turned out to be an inestimable treasure—no less than the whole of the wood-work which had decorated the old reading-room in the "Bibliothèque Impériale," a marvel of artistic workmanship, supposed to have been designed and carved for the great Colbert. When the wood-work had been cleansed of all impurities, even Récapé himself was astonished. The carvings were voted, by competent judges, to be among the finest productions of the reign of Louis XIV., and were purchased soon afterwards by M. Maillet du Boulay, a rich amateur, for the sum of 8,000 francs. Another instance of like enormity happened three years ago. A wrought-iron balustrade was taken down from the grand staircase of the same "Bibliothèque," and was also sold, by weight, to some *Auvergnat*. A goldsmith of Gonesse saw it, and became its happy possessor for the sum of 1,200 francs. On being told of the affair, the inevitable M. Récapé went immediately to Gonesse to make himself, at any cost, master of the balustrade, which is said to be one of the most wonderful specimens of wrought-iron in existence.

A STATUE OF GRATTAN.—A movement is about to be set on foot for the erection of a statue in College-green, Dublin, to the memory of the illustrious Henry Grattan. The site will be opposite the building which was the scene of the orator's triumphs, and in the immediate vicinity of Foley's statues of Burke and Goldsmith, in front of "Old Trinity."

LUNACY IN ESSEX.—Lunacy appears to be still slowly increasing in Essex. On Christmas day, 1892, the number of inmates in the county lunatic asylum was 498; on the corresponding date of 1893 it had risen to 521, at the corresponding date of 1894 to 550, at the corresponding date of 1895 to 554, at the corresponding date of 1896 to 573, at the corresponding date of 1897 to 587, and at the corresponding date of 1898 to 599.

EARTHQUAKE WAVE.—In a recent discussion at Melbourne, before the Royal Society, relating to the South American earthquake, it was stated that the great wave which rolled on the coasts of New Zealand and all the eastern and southern shores of Australia, on the 15th of August, must have rolled over the Pacific Ocean in 18 hours, or at the rate of 363 miles an hour.



[THE EFFECT OF A NAME.]

FAIRLEIGH; OR, THE BANKER'S SECRET

CHAPTER XI.

THOUGH Fairleigh received a momentary rebuff by the reply of Florence, his was not a nature to feel much abashed, and he presently said, somewhat earnestly:

"Weally, I have got myself into a vewy unpleasant fix. I most sincerely hope I have not offended you, Miss Ormsby? I assure you, if such were the case, I should be vewy unhappy. Now you cannot imagawn how much your defence of your friend has raised you in my estimation, for it has prowan that you are staunch in friendship, and that is a great quality, aw!"

"I desire that you will not attempt to flatter me. I have taken no offence. I am a great friend to truth and detest shallowness," responded Florence, with sarcasm, something strange for her, but in this case not unmerited.

"It quite pains me, Miss Ormsby, to think foww a moment that you doubt my word."

"I have not said that I doubted your word," rejoined Florence, to whom the puppy's fawning and equivocating style of conversation was becoming distasteful.

"Miss Ormsby—ahem, do you respect mechanics?"

"Is that your question, Mr. Fairleigh?"

"Yass, it is exawctly."

"A person who assumes to look down upon mechanics, has no part of true manliness or womanhood about them. Mechanics are the foundation and mainstay of every nation. Kings may ride in their chariots and call the people the rabble. But it is the mechanic by his genius, who has conceived the model of the carriage in his brain, and put together by his hands, this same carriage that supports his majesty and keeps him from falling to the earth. The place wherein he sits in royal dignity, was planned and put together by men of the rabble whom he deemed not fit to enter his presence. The fiery locomotive that rushes over the plains, down by the foaming river, and through dense forests, carrying its load of wealth and living freight, is the product of the mechanic's brain, the work of the mechanic's hand. Made, that rich men may ride like the wind, and save time and money. Yet, persons, ignorant, superficial, shallow, vapid, insipid, frivolous persons, assume to look down upon a mechanic; in so doing they only injure themselves, for they

show themselves up to people of common sense as devoid of discrimination, barren of nobleness of nature, without brains, but merely a human balloon, puffed up with the gasses of frivolity, vanity, conceit, and the quintessence of foolishness."

"Weally, Miss Ormsby, you awway quite eloquent."

"Again," continued Florence, her cheeks blushing, and her eyes sparkling with excitement as she stamped her little foot with vexation at her auditor's listlessness. "Again, I say: Who conceived the great project of navigation by steam, which has added so many millions of pounds to the coffers of commerce in so short a time? Who thought of, and constructed the telegraph, that enables rich men to send words upon the lightning's wings, and tell each other of the rise and fall of stocks, that they may save them wealth? Who does all this? Who furnishes the labour that generates a capital, and without which there could be no such thing as capital? Why, the mechanic, the farmer, the artisan, they all come under the head of my subject. And some people who have got a sniff of royal purple, read a few words of French, hug a poodle dog, and nearly faint at the sight of a kitchen, look down upon mechanics. It is well they do, for they are not good or sensible enough to look up to them. So now, Mr. Fairleigh."

And the little beauty tossed her sunny curls, and looked up at her companion with a smile of triumph.

"Weally, Miss Ormsby, a vewy logical awgment, quite worthy of the president of a railroad," remarked Fairleigh.

"And all I am sorry for is, that I have been 'casting pearls,' etc., you understand, sir," she ironically returned.

Mr. Albert Fairleigh had overrated his powers of sarcasm. He twirled his slender cane, stroked his moustache, looked towards the sea, gazed at the heavens, coughed, adjusted his collar, pulled down his cuffs, and then after he had jerked, pulled, twisted, and driven his vexation away, said:

"Well, we wown't quawwel, my dear Miss Ormsby."

"Oh, you may if you want to, I always expect that from children," she replied, with caustic severity.

A very larged-sized oath arose to Mr. Fairleigh's lips, but he checked it, and with a sardonic smile, savouring strongly of suppressed anger and mortification, replied:

"You awway sawcastic, Miss Ormsby."

"You are mistaken, Mr. Fairleigh; I only use sarcasm with brilliant persons."

If she had been near enough to him she might have heard his teeth grate, but as she had dropped

his arm a few moments before, she was saved that annoyance, or pleasure.

Clarence and his companion now joined them. "Where did Charley go, Floss; I have just thought of him?"

"He went into the house, I believe," replied Florence.

"Oh, that is Mr. Rowe you speak of, is it not?" queried Miss Morse.

"It is," rejoined Clarence.

"I like his looks very much," added Miss Morse, half in earnest, and endeavouring to pique Fairleigh.

"I believe I should fall in love with him were I to be long in his company."

Fairleigh controlled himself enough to reply, though with a very ill grace; he had not recovered from the effect of Florence's railery, and said:

"There's no accounting for some people's tastes."

"Or persons either, as to that matter," replied Miss Morse.

Clarence smiled.

Fairleigh seemed to be the target for sarcasm practise, and not relishing the shafts that had wounded him so often for the past few moments, he repressed his anger enough to propose a return in a moderately steady voice.

Clarence, from motives of mere courtesy, invited Mr. Fairleigh to the house, who to his great satisfaction, refused.

Miss Morse returned with Mr. Fairleigh, while Clarence and his sister proceeded to the house.

"I wonder what caused Mr. Rowe's sudden withdrawal. Do you know, Clarence? I thought he looked half sad, half provoked, and his manner was so constrained that it astonished me," said Florence, as they walked on.

"He is not angry," replied her brother. "Although, I will admit that I never saw such a change in a man as there has been in him since we struck English shores."

"And the cause?" asked Florence, with interest perceptible in her tones.

"I have not the least idea of," he rejoined.

Both now entered the house, Florence seeking her mother, and Clarence proceeding to his friend's room. He knocked, and received no reply. He pushed open the door, and there lay Rowe upon the bed, asleep.

Clarence seated himself. As he did so he moved his chair, which caused his friend to awake.

Standing up, Rowe said:

"Ah, you here, Clarence? How long have you been here?"

"About two minutes. But why did you leave us?"

I was so much engaged with my fair companion that I did not note your absence until we started to return."

"My head troubled me somewhat, and then in addition to that, I could not bear the company of that wretched imitation of, and libel upon man, that fop Fairleigh."

"I thought you did not like him. I think he will shun Florence for the future."

"Why? Did he insult her?" thundered Rowe, leaping to his feet, and bringing his disengaged hand down upon the table with terrific force.

"No-o," replied Clarence, staring at his friend in utter amazement, and a faint glimmering of the truth flashed across his mind.

"Well, I had no business to be so hasty," said Rowe, apologetically, and remembering himself. "I hated this fellow from the first moment that I put my eyes on him."

"I disliked him. His drawl and affectation acted like nausea upon my system," answered Clarence.

"Who is he, and what is he?" inquired Rowe.

"Miss Morse informed me that he came from London. He had a letter of introduction to her father from a firm the latter is connected with in business ways. In short, came highly recommended, and has a passport into the best society."

"But what caused you to say that he would in future shun Florence?"

"Oh, I had forgotten. She gave him to understand that she was not pleased with his company."

"I thought she would not like his conversation. Any sensible girl would not."

"Do you know, Charles, Floss thought that you were provoked with her, although she would be displeased if she knew that I told you."

"I provoked her? Nonsense! I had no cause, and if I had, 'twould be boyish to show it."

"I did not suppose that you were, but she is so very sensitive, I thought I would ask you."

"Perfectly right. But let us go out; I am weary of remaining here."

As they passed out, Clarence asked:

"Where are you going?"

"Oh, anywhere—I'm not particular."

"Then let us go to the hotel, and see if among the new arrivals, there are any of our friends."

"They had arrived near the hotel, when Rowe ejaculated:

"There is that odious Fairleigh—make up your mind to be bored to death. I wish I had cause to thrash him; his very presence exasperates me."

CHAPTER XII.

CLARENCE had no chance to reply ere Mr. Fairleigh advanced, and placing his arm inside that of Clarence with the utmost familiarity, drawled forth:

"That is a deuced-pretty sister of yours, Ormsby; she is wewy shawpy, too."

Rowe's teeth came together with a clash. It required all his volition to restrain himself from springing upon the puppy, and giving him the shaking he so richly deserved.

"I would thank you, sir," exclaimed Clarence, hastily disengaging his arm, and regarding Mr. Fairleigh with reddened cheek and flashing eyes, "to use mere respectful language when you speak of my sister. In the second place, sir, I desire no familiarity. I wish you expressly to understand that I am to be addressed as 'Mr.'"

Fairleigh retreated a step, his eyes gleamed for an instant, he bit his lip a moment, and then resuming his wonted looks, said:

"Mistaw Ormsby, I beg your pardon. I hope I have not offended you."

"You are excused, sir. But I prize my sister beyond everything but my parents, and it makes my blood boil to hear her name lightly spoken," replied Clarence, thinking from the fellow's low tone and contrite look, that he had really injured his feelings, and wishing to make all due reparation. By nature, Clarence, like Florence, was unsuspicious and confiding, and did not look at human nature with that keenness and vigilance which characterised the scrutiny of his friend Rowe.

"Oh, no," answered Fairleigh, "I would knock a fellow down that spoke lightly of my mistaw, and you, of course, must feel the same. I assuraw you I nouwish the greatest respect fow yowaw mistaw. It's the confounded habit of speaking without due regard, and ahem you see it's wewy hard to break off, you undawstand, aw?"

"Perfectly," Clarence sententially replied.

They entered the hotel, and proceeded to the office.

"Clarence," said Rowe, whispering in his friend's ear, and directing his attention to a well but plainly dressed gentleman, seated near the window, his nose-south had pulled down over his forehead, and a merchant's chain hanging from his mouth, "isn't that Mr. Hardman?"

"I think it is; yes, he recognises us."

Mr. Fairleigh held back, and now and then gazed furtively towards the door.

Near the entrance to the hotel stood an individual, to all appearance, an old woman. She was clad in a dark dress, with a black shawl thrown over her shoulders, and a plain bonnet upon her head, under which features, bold, coarse, and swarthy, were perceptible. Upon her arm she bore a basket filled with the assortments which pedlars upon a small scale usually carry.

Mr. Fairleigh hesitated a moment, glanced into the office, then at the woman. As he did so her eyes met his with a significant glance; then she placed her hand upon her breast in such a manner that the thumb pointed to the neck, and the little finger to the earth, meanwhile pretending to be rearranging her shawl.

As Fairleigh saw that his brow contracted, he bit his lip nervously, reflected a moment, and then followed leisurely in her wake. At that moment, Charles Rowe raised his eyes and saw the perplexed and pre-occupied look upon Fairleigh's face. Turning to the window his glance fell upon the old woman; in an instant Fairleigh appeared. A vague suspicion passed through Rowe's mind; he left the office and watched them. Unfortunately there was no place near by, where he could secrete himself, and he once more retraced his steps.

The old woman trudged slowly onward, until she had left the hotel some distance in her rear, and then stopped at a spot where there were but few passing.

Fairleigh increased his pace as he saw her halt, and in a moment came up with her.

She glanced cautiously around, and resuming herself that no one was near; still in a husky, hoarse voice, rather coarse for a woman:

"Be careful! Dayton is on the scent! If he sees you once he will never forget you!"

"The—he is!" muttered Fairleigh, while his face paled; "how long since?"

"Sh—! no questions. There is more trouble; leave here immediately."

As she said this she placed a letter in his hand.

He glanced at the envelope, and then quickly queried:

"What is this? Where is the—?"

"Silence!" ejaculated the female pedlar, in a whisper; "ask no questions. I must be gone—leave me—someone approaches," and she hobbled briskly away.

Fairleigh crumpled the letter in his hand, and then thrust it into his pocket. As he did so he muttered an oath.

The cause of his exclamation was the appearance of Charles Rowe advancing towards him. Fairleigh inwardly trembled; he was questioning whether Rowe noticed their earnest conversation.

"Aw, Mistaw Wowe," said the dissembler, resuming his easy manner and Cockney drawl, "if you had come a moment sooner, you might have heard my fortune told."

"Indeed!" replied Rowe, who was convinced that he was falsifying. "Who by—yonder old woman?"

"Aw, yes," resumed Fairleigh. "She was the most pavement old fool I evaw came across. She spoke to me at the dock; perhaps you saw me come out—you did not, aw? Vewy strange. Well, she bowed me emmossally, and I followed haw to get wif of haw."

"What did she tell you?" enquired Rowe, wishing to test his fabricating qualities.

"Well, ahem, it is a most delicious fate she predicted for me, aw, yes. She said, 'I would mawwy a young lady, with the most beautiful golden hair—'

aw, vewy nice, isn't it?—'and the daughter of a banker; aw, quite singulaw, yes."

Rowe longed to annihilate the insipid coxcomb, whom, he was now convinced, was lying; but he stifled his anger, and gently said:

"Is that all?"

"Oh, no! She fathaw said, 'that the young lady was staying now at a fashionable waterwing-place, and that her mother was, at this moment, in a hotel at the same place, aw. Of course, then I could have no doubt in wegawd to whom she meant; but it is a vewy pleasant fate—vewy pleasant. Don't you think so, Mistaw Wowe? Of course you do."

"I certainly do—when you get her," thought Rowe, but merely answered:

"Certainly, Mr. Fairleigh; a pleasant fate indeed."

"But, my deaw Mistaw Wowe, if I dared to tell you the wewy," continued Fairleigh, with an obsequious simper.

"Pray let me hear it," remarked Rowe, who was the equal of his opponent in dissembling.

"Aw, you awaw intewested; I don't wouddaw, so was I. She said that I had a vewy dangewous wival, in the person of a daww young man, who was, at pwesent, in the young lady's family, and that wival

loved her vewy much.' Aw, most singulaw coincidence I evaw expewienced; quite awwwhelming."

For a moment Rowe's dark eye gleamed, his teeth were set firmly together, and he felt his blood boil with anger. But he had no real cause; for Mr. Fairleigh glossed his insinuations so skillfully with urbanity and obsequiousness, that it made for him a stronghold which a gentleman could not get over. Consequently, Rowe was obliged to crush the rising spirit, and he answered, in a tolerably pleasant voice:

"Fortune-tellers, as a rule, are not prophets, Mr. Fairleigh."

"Certainly not," he said, with a kind of malicious smile, which did not escape his companion's notice, "certainly not, my deaw Mistaw Wowe, pay no attention to their idle talk, not the least. All faw money—espessally. But sometimes in a coincidence like this—it is quite amusing, aw—don't you think so, Mistaw Wowe?" with another of those malicious grins.

Rowe made no reply, and the two entered the hotel, where they found Clarence still conversing with Mr. Hardman.

Mr. Rowe introduced Mr. Hardman to Mr. Fairleigh, who said:

"Ah, wewy, an amussing pleasaw to see you, sir, vewy, indeed. A vewy nice pipe you have theaw—impawted, eh?"

"Aw, gwawine gwawiness!" returned Mr. Hardman, twisting his features into an indolent shape, and sharply eying his visitor from head to foot as he imitated his voice and manner. "I think I've had the most gwawing pleasaw of meeting yowaw wwo-thaw, only you have gwawen tawder and are dawwed theaw."

Clarence and Charles, from one irresistible impulse, burst into a roar of laughter.

Fairleigh trembled with resentment, then flourished his light cane, and in spasmodic utterance delivered himself of the following:

"You awaw vewy impudent, sir! You awaw not acquainted with the common wules of politeness, aw you, sir? You look as though you waw boww in the woods."

"Don't judge me by yourself. I have no affinity with tree tops," interrupted Mr. Hardman, impudently.

"You awaw no gentleman, sir, no, sir," continued Mr. Fairleigh. "If my friewd, Mistaw Wowe, had not introduced me, I should call you out, sir! Yes, sir! allow me to inform you, sir, that you have insulted a gentleman, sir!"

"Glad you have told me so, or I shouldn't have known it," again interrupted Mr. Hardman.

Many had gathered around. The air was resounding with laughter, when Mr. Fairleigh, feeling that it devolved upon him to vanquish his antagonist, said:

"Yes, sir, I wish to tell you, sir, that you awaw a clown, sir, and I would call you out if Mr. Wowe had not introduced me."

"Indeed, young 'Simplefrits,'" returned Mr. Hardman, with the same ironical smile, "you would stand in no fear of losing any brains; all you've got are in your pocket-book."

Laughter long and uproarious greeted this rally, and Fairleigh, shaking with anger, sprang towards his opponent; but the calm, burning light of that unflinching gray eye stopped him as quickly as if a wall had intervened, and feeling that he had been a common-laughing-stock long enough, he hastily left the office and ascended to his room. Then he threw aside his assumed character, banished all thoughts of his discomfiture, and drawing the massive from his pocket, proceeded to peruse it. It contained the following words:

"Susan is after you! Took the twelve o'clock train! Sharp, or your game is up. Dayton is after us! Leave immediately. Signed, Maud."

Fairleigh leaped from his chair. The listless expression had vanished, and fear, anger and mortification, now sat upon his features. Crushing the letter in his hand, and giving utterance to a terrible oath, he paced the room excitedly, meanwhile cursing the two names mentioned in the letter, with growing vehemence.

Let us leave him and his excitement and return to the hotel.

Clarence had been holding quite an animated and pleasant conversation with Mr. Hardman, and found him, despite his bluntness, a man of sense and observation, and a very agreeable companion.

Mr. Hardman was a strange mixture of human nature. One of those persons whom people detest upon a short acquaintance, but admire and respect as they learn more of their character. A man with a kind heart, yet blunt, outspoken, and apparently possessed of no sensitiveness; who detested frivolity, and had no scruple about advancing his opinions, asked or unasked; who ignored sentiment, scoffed at

fashion and its followers. Such a man was Mr. Samuel Hardman.

After talking a short time longer, Clarence and Charles left the hotel, with a half-promise from Mr. Hardman that he would visit them; for with all his peculiarities the young man felt a strange liking for him.

"Clarence," remarked Rowe, as they proceeded, "I must ere long bid you farewell."

"What! Are you crazy? No use, Charley, talking that nonsense to me. You have tried the experiment once before. I assure you it will not work."

"But, Clarence, I must. I have made up my mind. Be serious. You know that I must enter upon my career in life, before all I have learned is drowned in pleasure, and I rust from want of practise."

"But in the heat of summer? Will you leave loving friends and the cold sea air to immerse yourself in a little sweltering town? Nonsense, man, wait until autumn, and then if you are determined, I will no longer oppose you."

"You are very kind, Clarence, and I appreciate it; but it is hardly proper that I should stay so long upon my first visit."

"I will say no more," replied Clarence, "but leave my sister, who is now approaching, to manage my case for me. Ten to one that I have a decision in my favour."

Florence was approaching, and Rowe felt too keenly that if she undertook her brother's case he could not resist.

She approached in her playful manner, and with mock severity took him to task for leaving her so abruptly under the verandah. Clarence waited until she had finished her remarks, and then informed her of Charles' proposed departure.

A sad expression for an instant shaded her features, and then, conscious of showing the feeling, and wishing to annul any effect it might have caused, she burst into a merry laugh, and exclaimed:

"Now, sir, you are arraigned before the supreme court of this district to show cause, if you have any, why you should go away from us."

What answer could he make? He gazed into her beautiful eyes for an instant, and then stammered out:

"But I must—"

"Must. That is no answer. Unless you give some valid excuse you must remain. Now, what have you to say?"

Rowe was perplexed, aye, almost bewildered. The real reason forced itself upon his mind, and drowned all other thoughts. He could not tell that, and no semblance of an apology entered his mind.

"Well, why don't you answer?" asked Florence, noticing his pre-occupied expression, and wondering at it.

"I was thinking," he mused.

"Does it require so much reflection? Methinks it would not take long to reply if you had a just cause."

"No, it would not take long," he thought; "ah, not long—but alas, it will be long before I utter it."

He raised his head, and saw her eyes fastened intently upon his face. He seemed to remember that he was making a serious affair of it, and feared, he had betrayed his feelings by his grave silence. To dissipate any such thoughts in the minds of his companions, he smiled pleasantly, and said:

"My profession must be sufficient."

"Nonsense!" interrupted his persecutor—yet, charmer. "Say, will you stay?"

He saw it was useless—the charm was working—those eyes were bent upon him, that fairy hand trembled in his grasp, a torrent of thoughts rushed through his mind, his heart beat loudly against his side, and he felt the chain of love that bound it grow tighter, and if his life had depended on it he would have answered as he did:

"I will!"

CHAPTER XIII.

Mrs. DALVANE and son next day commenced their search for a small cottage. None were to be had in the town, but they received information of a small cottage, situated a mile away.

After some deliberation between mother and son, and a visit to the house, which they found in a very pretty and romantic spot, they decided to take it.

Plain and substantial furniture was purchased, and placed in the house, and thither they repaired.

"Twas a neat little cottage, with its gabled lead roof and climbing vines, its grassy lawn in front, and the little garden, which was in perfect order, as left by its former tenant. In the small, square parlour were seated Mrs. Dalvane and Walter. Everything about them bore an air of neatness. The furniture was plain, but it was in order. The inmates seemed to revive in the atmosphere of cleanliness and purity; for both looked much better than when compressed in the stowage of the *Haldee*, with its foul air and foul company."

Wishing to cheer his mother, and drive her thoughts from care, he raised his eyes hopefully into her face, and said:

"Well, dear mother, we have cause to be thankful that we have a shelter, and one where we can enjoy each other's company."

Then, glancing approvingly around the room, he resumed:

"How different this from the nauseous and pent-up steerage we so lately left!"

"Yes, my son, and we must do something to keep it. We saved a little by coming in the steerage, but the furniture has cost more than I expected."

"But, mother, I have hopes that I can get work. To-morrow I shall try, and it does not make the slightest difference what it is, or how hard, as long as I can help you."

"But you are not strong," she said, glancing at her son's pale face and slender form.

"What I lack in strength I shall make up in will," he earnestly responded.

"And your painting—?"

"I will work upon that when I have leisure. Although I have not succeeded as yet, I can but work; then, if I never succeed, I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that I tried, and shall have no cause in future years to blame myself because I did not," he cheerfully replied, noticing the look of pain that came over her face as she spoke, and wishing to appear as unconcerned as possible.

"You are a noble boy; you are all that I have to love. Oh, if you could only devote the whole of your time to your art, which is so dear to you, how happy I should be!"

"Nay, mother, do not repine," he said, tenderly kissing the pallid face that was bent upon him with a look of unutterable love.

At that moment the door-bell rang.

"Who can it be?" remarked Walter. "We know no one here."

"The landlord, I presume. I have not seen him yet. I transacted my business with his clerk."

Walter arose and answered the bell. As his mother had surmised, it was the landlord.

To have looked upon this man, and noticed his overbearing manner, the patronising way in which he looked down upon the young artist, the measured and pompous style in which he entered the room, the mode in which he twirled his watch chain, and the slow and measured way in which he lifted his eyeglasses, placed them across his nose, and then scrutinised the apartment, would have done credit to one of the first water. After staring a few moments, he bent his lordly head, and condescended to bestow a look upon Mrs. Dalvane, who had been gazing upon him in mute astonishment.

He wished to impress her with his dignity and consequence; he coughed in a manner in which great men are apt to do, as a kind of preface to his remarks.

Walter moved uneasily in his chair. He was a high-spirited boy, of great courage, and the insolent way that he looked at his mother caused honest indignation to take possession of his breast, but out of obedience to her and the unpleasantness he knew it would cause her, he was only restrained from giving the fellow a little of his mind, which, had he done so, would probably have been in terms more expressive than elegant.

This necessity was still farther obviated by the man's remarking:

"You are settled here?"

Mrs. Dalvane bowed.

"Ahem!" he coughed, "your rent will be due in one month."

"I am aware of that, sir. You need have no fears with regard to its liquidation," was Mrs. Dalvane's answer, in a reserved ladylike manner.

After a moment's pause, she asked:

"Are you the landlord?"

"Well, not exactly, madam," replied the great man. "You see, the gentleman who owns these houses places great trust in me; we are partners—ahem! I am the silent partner. He never visits the place. In fact, I do the whole of the business, and have complete charge of the affairs. You see, it constitutes me more as guardian of the property," he concluded, with a grand flourish.

Mrs. Dalvane's face showed supreme disgust, as she listened to his harangue. She could not fail to see through the shallow pretence, or fail to notice the conceited and imbecile mind that it proceeded from. As for Walter, he had stamped the man as an unmitigated "braggadocio," in his own mind, before he had heard him speak three words.

"What may be the name of this gentleman whom you are so kind to act as guardian for?" inquired Mrs. Dalvane.

"It may be Smith, or it may be Jones, but it is neither," replied the man, rubbing his hands, and simpering at what he thought to be a powerful jest.

Walter was about to speak, when his mother glanced at him, and he forbore. Turning once more towards the man, she asked:

"Will you tell me his name?"

"Oh, yes, certainly. Merely a jest of mine. I often jest. He is a great banker—a great man," with emphasis upon the adjective "He respects me very much; his name is—Ralph Ormsby."

As the words struck upon Mrs. Dalvane's ear, her form became rigid, her face was contracted as if by a terrible spasm, her breath came thick and fast, her hands closed together like a vice, and she seemed to be in most acute pain.

"Mother! Mother! What is it?" gasped Walter, terribly frightened, and kneeling down by her side.

The man looked curiously from one to the other, muttered a few unintelligible words, and then sat and stared at the stricken woman and anxious son, like an Egyptian mummy.

For a moment Mrs. Dalvane's face was deathlike to behold; then she slowly recovered from her stupor. The natural functions resumed their wonted vigour, and looking down upon her son, she said:

"Fear not, Walter; it has passed. I am quite strong now. I am subject to these shocks, sir. They take me when I am least prepared for it," she apologetically remarked.

He did not reply, but sat gazing on her like a sphynx, his mouth and eyes wide open.

"Have you any more business to transact?" asked Mrs. Dalvane, weary of the company of the man with the eyeglasses.

"Ahem! no, none that I know of. I shall come again in a month," he responded, slowly rising. "I shall come again in a month, you understand," he said, lowering his eyeglasses, with great consequence.

"Very well," was the only reply vouchsafed, and with pleasure Walter closed the door upon his retreating form, and hastened back, only to find his mother in tears.

He stopped. A look of genuine pain, amounting almost to agony, passed across his features, and in sad and hurried accents, he exclaimed:

"Mother, dear mother, do not weep! What causes your sorrow?"

"Don't speak to me, my son. I cannot bear it," she peremptorily replied, though in accents sad and broken.

Oh, such grief as filled the heart of the son at these words! He knew that they were not words of anger; he knew that they were not meant for reproach. He only knew that it was a hidden sorrow, which he could not share. A sorrow which, in her unselfishness, she had kept from him, that he, too, might not be oppressed by it. He knew this; for in times past she had told him as much. And in the knowledge of this, with the profound love that he bore for her—yes, the idolatry, the reverence that he had for her kindness—the more he saw of it, the more he wished that she would unburden her mind to him, and let him have the pleasure—for to this noble son it would have been a pleasure—to share her sorrow with her. But this was denied him—even having their grief in common was denied. For even that he prayed. What emotions surged through the breast of the son, as he stood thus, and saw the tears fall like rain-drops from his mother's eyes, saw the dear form convulsed with emotion, heard her sob, each one of which entered his tender heart like a knife, only with more and bitter keenness.

He watched her narrowly, hardly daring to speak; yet, how could he help it? His face wore a look of the deepest solicitude, his breast heaved in answer to the throbbings within, his whole mind, body, heart, and soul were centred in his mother. Every nerve answered to each throb of his heart, every artery was permeated with that mingled adoration, love, and anxiety that hold possession of his mind. He stood transfixed by these emotions, when that beloved voice said:

"Walter!"

He sprang towards her, rested his head in her lap, her hands fell gently upon his brown curls, he uttered one word, "Mother!" Yet it carried more force and meaning than a whole dictionary could, laid out in elaborate composition by its author.

What pure, transcendent, holy, speechless love is that which exists between a true mother and a good son! There is nothing in this world of ours that approximates to it. Other love fades into utter and total insignificance when compared to it. In sorrow, when the dark clouds of adversity lower on the mother and son, when the cold, unsympathising, heedless world ignores one and cuts the other, when poverty's stinging pangs are felt—then nearer and nearer they draw together, dearer and dearer become they to each other; the love seems as of heaven, the outer world is nothing, their hearts are responsive chords in two bodies, but of one being; each lives in the other. Both find blessings, even in the midst of poverty, the blessing of being spared to

each other—take one away and life becomes an elongated curse to the remaining one. Under the inspiration of their feelings, both enter with ardour upon anything which will help the other. The joy of being able to do so, the gratification it affords, cannot be measured. It is a joy, and a holy joy, not of earth, but more sublime, carrying with it feelings that the most genius-gifted pen of mortal cannot do justice to, for the heart speaks, the soul speaks, and both speak silently.

No wonder then, that as Walter Dalvane felt the touch of his mother's hand, the silent kiss impressed upon his brow, like the breath of an angel from heaven, that he exclaimed, in the fullness of his heart:

"Oh, heaven! of all the blessings that thou hast given to man, the greatest is a true, devoted mother."

And as the mother gazed fondly down upon the dear head that lay upon her lap—blood of her blood, flesh of her flesh—the hand that clasped hers with that tenacious grasp which told of love, she lifted her heart in silent prayer, and thanked heaven for her only stay—her only life—all that she lived for—the moral, pure, affectionate son, that cheered her life, and rendered earth pleasant to her. She murmured, mentally:

"Oh, heaven! I thank thee for this—the widow's greatest blessing—life's only charm—heaven's choicest, purest gift—my son!"

Weakly, ineffectually, I know—fruitlessly, I fear, have I attempted to give a faint protrature of those feelings that exist between a true mother and a good son.

For a short time they remained in the same position. Mrs. Dalvane was doing her best to expel the grim phantasm of the past from her mind, while Walter was disturbed by wild and conflicting thoughts. He looked up, and unthinkingly inquired:

"Mother, did the mention of the name of the proprietor of this estate, affect you?"

A passionate outburst of tears, and a rocking of his mother's frame, was his only answer.

He accused himself of carelessness. This gave him much pain; but the irresistible impulse to know that which had so grieved her, and was such a mystery to him, again impelled him to speak. He placed his arms around her neck, and with a hope that it would not make her feel sad, said, in the gentlest tones:

"Dear mother, tell me what causes you so much sorrow? Let me share it with you."

"Oh, Walter! my child! If you love me, do not torture me with that!"

She arose, and paced the room, pressing her hands upon her throbbing brows, and sobbing violently.

"Oh, mother!" he ejaculated, terrified at her weird looks, and oh, so bitterly repenting that he had spoken, "forgive me! forgive me! I will say no more."

She did not appear to hear him, but continued her walk, looking the picture of sorrow and despair.

Walter fell into a chair and covered his face, to shut out from his view her agonised expression. But it lingered in his mind; it suggested all kinds of dreadful contingencies, and caused him the most acute pain, both of mind and heart. Oh, how he regretted having spoken! what pangs of remorse shot through his mind! He almost cursed himself to think that he should thus wound her whom he loved so devotedly. The silence was dreadful, the suspense intolerable; he removed his hands. His mother had seated herself, and was endeavouring to still her perturbed spirit.

He gazed upon her reverentially. Her eyes fell upon him. A faint—oh, so faint and shadowy a smile, passed over her features.

He accepted it as a good omen, and once again knelt down by her side.

She looked upon him so kindly. She felt that she must check her grief for his sake. Knowing the great love that he nourished for her, she was well aware that it must cause him speechless agony. She did not blame him for wishing to know that dread secret; it was but natural that he should.

Thus she reasoned and called forth all her volition to help to drive sadness away, and appear cheerful. The effort was partially successful, and she said:

"We must never again think of our conversation this evening, darling."

"Willingly, gladly do I assent," he earnestly replied.

"We, both of us, suffer too much. We must cheer each other. It is not likely that I shall be spared to—"

"Forbear! dearest mother, forbear! Speak not of it—think not of it! Oh, heaven! what anguish!"

The thought even almost caused his blood to pause in his veins; he was deeply affected; the tears rolled down his cheeks, and his body trembled like a leaf in the wind.

"There, there, Walter," she said, soothingly, as she smoothed his brow, "I did not wish to pain you."

The fresh country air will do me good. We will not anticipate troubles?"

"No," he replied, gaining courage from her words, "we will not be sad. We will try and be happy. I shall get some work, so that I can support you and myself; and here, in this little house, with its unpretending furniture and plain appointments, we can be more contented than some who have their thousands; for here love and harmony will dwell. We will be happy, will we not?"

She looked with hope and admiration at the young face that was lighted up with the fire of youthful enthusiasm and ambition, and smilingly responded:

"Yes, your example is good. We must each be cheerful, and each help the other; then neither can be sad."

"True, mother. One smile from you would spur me on, where the plaudits of ten thousand would not move me. Now, shall I read to you?" he added, wishing to change the topic, and divert her thoughts.

"Yes, dear, I should be pleased."

"What shall it be—Byron, Milton, or Shakespeare?"

"Byron's 'Vision of Judgment,' if you please, my son."

He chose the volume and, seating himself, began the perusal of that beautiful poem. He was an excellent reader, and gave to the sublime thoughts of that illustrious author the delineation, in voice and gesture, that they required. It was a pretty domestic scene. The mother, with her expressive face turned towards her son, listening with attention, not unmixed with pride, to the sweet cadence of his voice, as it descended into pathos, and its depth and clearness as it rolled eloquently forth in some stirring passage.

The evening passed pleasantly away. The next morning, bright and early, Walter started forth to endeavour to procure for himself a situation.

The walk to the town was a pleasant one. The warm summer breeze fanned his cheek and wafted gladness into his heart; the waters glimmered and danced bewitchingly under the bright and cheerful rays of the sun; the soft and dulcet voices of the birds, as they fluttered from tree to tree, made music on his ear, and all nature seemed to combine in one uplifted voice, from its many and diversified sources, in praising its Maker. It had a happy effect upon Walter; to whom the merry voices and pleasant aspects of nature seemed to augur success. He was of a poetic temperament, and often found himself hugging delusive ideas to his breast, which invariably recoiled upon him, and caused him great pain. He had not yet learned that great lesson, which constant friction with the world always teaches, though few heed it—to be practical; and he had yet to suffer more from his imaginative day-dreaming and romantic proclivities.

He entered the town and immediately proceeded with the business in hand. It was something new to him, soliciting work, and it hurt his sensitive nature. But quelling all qualms which arose from pride, and they were many, he entered a shop, and politely stated his mission. A gruff "No" was the answer that brought the blood to his cheeks and the fire to his eye. Repressing his rebellious feelings, he continued his search, but nearly all gave him the answer that at first had wounded him. With sad feelings he turned his steps homewards.

If men, especially those having the disposal of situations, would remember that even they were boys once, would treat young applicants as though they were human, many of them might have more friends. A kind word costs nothing and sometimes does a vast amount of good.

A week passed away, and he was still without remunerative employment. His painting he worked upon with an enthusiasm and perseverance which at least merited success, whether he received it or not. Accidentally he received information that a clerk was wanted in an insurance office. For a wonder he was treated politely, and after some conversation he was engaged, at a salary of a pound a week.

True, it was a small sum, but it was a beginning, and with a light heart and elastic step, he hurried on towards his home. How merrily the birds sang, how the waters sparkled with new brilliancy, how glorious the flowers appeared, how soft the verdant grass carpet that his feet fell silently upon. Nature seemed to rejoice at his success, and he rejoiced with nature.

His mother saw him, as he entered the house, and she knew by his expression, by his very gait, that he had been successful. She could tell his emotions by his face, and was not at all surprised when, in youthful love and gladness, he threw his arms about her neck, and told her of his good fortune.

'Twas Saturday. He was to enter upon his duties the next Monday. That was the principal topic of the evening, and not strange either, for it was the one nearest their hearts. With new hope, Walter

Dalvane proceeded to enter upon his new routine on the following Monday. He found his employer a kind, considerate man, the duties light, and not at all wearisome, consisting in the main of writing. As he was an expert with his pen, and bent his whole energies to the interests of his employer, they became attached to each other, and things went smoothly on. The little rooms grew more cheerful, and under the genial influence of the country air, and their comparative independence, Mrs. Dalvane visibly improved, although that look of chronic grief which time could not wear away, still clouded her face.

Walter noticed the change in her manner with gladness, and with the knowledge of that, his spirits rose accordingly.

A month passed away. During this time the little cottage had become endeared to both mother and son, and contentment, such as they had not experienced for years, found a place in their breasts, and manifested itself in their improved appearance. The rent had been paid to the pompous agent, and his company dispensed with for another month. Mrs. Dalvane was cognisant of the blessings; she was happy in the love of her son; but was her mind free? Did she enjoy life as one who had no past trouble to look back upon? Alas, no!

Walter was contented. He believed at last that a little quietude and happiness were to be vouchsafed them. Fortunately for him—for us all—we cannot unveil the future. If Walter Dalvane could have seen what was before him, what would have been his feelings?

(To be continued.)

"DELIGHTFUL MEN."

"Isn't he a delightful man?" This question was addressed to me by a lady in company, concerning a gentleman who had rendered himself, during the evening, peculiarly agreeable. Before I answer that question, I said I would like to see him at home. I would like to know if, when he jars his wife's feelings, he says, "Beg pardon" as smilingly and promptly as when he stepped upon yonder lady's dress. I would like to know if, when he comes home at night, he has some pleasant little things to say, such as he has scattered about so lavishly since he entered this room this evening; and whether if the badly-cooked dish, which he gallantly declared to the hostess at the table "could not have been improved," would have found a similar verdict on his own table, and to his own wife. That is the test. I am sorry to say that some of the most agreeable society-men, who could, by no possibility, be guilty of a rudeness abroad, could never be suspected in their own homes of ever doing anything else. The man who will invariably meet other ladies with "How very well you are looking!" will often never, from one day to another, take notice of his own wife's appearance, or if so, only to find fault. How bright that home would be to his wife with one half the courtesy and toleration he invariably shows to strangers. "Allow me to differ"—he blandly remarks to an opponent with whom he argues in company. "Fshaw! what do you know about it?" he says, at his own fireside and to his wife.

"Oh, how men miss it in disregarding these little matters," said a sad-eyed wife to me one day. And she said truly; for these little kindnesses are like a breath of fresh air from an open window in a stifled room; we lift our drooping heads and breathe again!

"Little," did I say! Can that be little which makes, or mars, the happiness of a human being? A man says a rough, rude word, or neglects the golden opportunity to say a kind one, and goes his selfish way and thinks it of no account. Then he marvels when he comes back—in sublime forgetfulness of the past—that the familiar eye does not brighten at his coming, or the familiar tongue voice a welcome. Then, on inquiry, if he is told of the rough word, he says: "O-o-h! that's it—is it? New it isn't possible you gave that a second thought? Why, I forgot all about it!" as if this last were really a palliation and a merit!

It would be ludicrous, this masculine obtuseness, were it not for the tragic consequences—were it not for the loving hearts that are chilled—the homes that are darkened—the lives that are blighted—and the dew and promise of the morning that are so needlessly turned into sombre night.

"Little things!" There are no little things. "Little things," so called, are the hinges of the universe. They are happiness, or misery; they are poverty, or riches; they are prosperity, or adversity; they are life, or death. Not a human being of us all, can afford to despise "the day of small things."

WHY CHRISTMAS WEATHER IS NOT SO COLD AS FORMERLY.—The real reason of the change is, not that the old-fashioned weather has deserted Christ-

mas, but that every Christmas since that of 1752 has deserted the old-fashioned weather. On that memorable occasion of the change from the old to the new style, an alteration of eleven days took place in the seasons, and immediately what had been the 5th of January in 1752 became the 25th of December 1751. Now, if we recollect, it is just about the 5th of January and onward from it that the coldest weather of the year comes on, even in these later days of ours. The great frost of nearly two years back, the most intense that has occurred in England since scientific tests have been widely used, began on the 3rd of January, and the records of the average of years will show much the same result; the greatest cold being almost invariably from that time to the end of the month. So let those of our readers who are inclined to be sentimental, and to wish for frozen ground and snow-laden trees, robins reduced by hunger and cold to an unnatural state of tameness, and other amenities of the period, remember that, when a "Christmas of the poets" is not to the fore, that it is not so much the season that is in fault as the now corrected aberrations of the Julian system of calculating the length of the year. If they really feel strongly on the subject, they have fortunately the option of migrating to Russia, where the old system is still in vogue; where Christmas Day now comes off on our Twelfth Day, and will get later and later in the course of time, if the Russians do not give in their adhesion some time or other, to the comparatively speaking, new order of things, which has now been in use for 286 years over the greater part of the continent of Europe.

ADELICIA.

BY THE

Author of "The Beauty of Paris," "Wild Rapture," &c.

CHAPTER V.

SIR OTTO remained silent until the two attendants who had been sent to the cottage returned with the report that the cottage was not at home, and there was no one at the cottage except an impudent knave of a fellow, who appeared to be recently from the wars from his tattered dress and battered appearance.

"He sits in the cottage door, my lord," reported one of the attendants, and using the Franco-Turkish language, much to the vexation of the inquisitive scrivener. "He hath his mouth armed with that Christian abomination called a pipe, and volumes of smoke are ever and anon pouring from his nostrils, while he busies himself with rubbing and polishing a suit of armour—not his own, but that of a knight—and he can be but an attendant or servitor of some kind. We saw, standing near, two horses, much blown with hard and recent riding."

"We asked him if his name were not Carl Walters, to which he replied by staring at us, and bidding us go to the devil."

"The insolent knave! But did you address him in English?"

"Yes, my lord, and he replied in Franco-Turkish, as one who had lived long in the East."

"Did you inform him of my presence?"

"We did; and therewith he said, most insolently:

"I bade you Infidels go to the devil; and since you serve Sir Otto, you will not have far to go."

"Whereupon you pierced him with your lance, did you not?" demanded the insulted knight.

"He is an Englishman, my lord, and without special command from your excellency's own lips, we dare not engage in a brawl with the subjects of the Queen of England."

"That command you shall soon receive, unless I see fit to punish the insolent churl with my own hand. Sound the recall, Omrah, and we will chastise this fellow for his impertinence."

The banner-bearer then blew that blast upon the trumpet which we have stated was heard by Master Stepmore and his companions, and which caused the scattered attendants of the knight to hasten towards the standard of their master.

"This fellow of whom this report is made," said Sir Otto to Ramorset, after relating to him the words of the attendant, "is perhaps Carl Walters."

"I think not, for Walters must now be a very old man. He is, more probably, the servant or equirer of the court gallant we see across the river."

"True, and let us hasten to learn from him the name and rank of his master," continued Sir Otto, as his followers rode up.

"Did any of you find any signs of the ford?" he asked.

A negative reply being given, Sir Otto struck his horse smartly with his spur, and with a brief word of command, dashed away towards the cottage, eager to vent upon some one the rage which had been

kindled in his heart by the sight of, perhaps, a favoured suitor of Adelia Louvaine.

His entire retinue followed, imitating the speed of their vexed leader, with the exception of Master Ramorset and the other person in citizen garb.

The fat scrivener seized the opportunity to exchange a few words with the other, who was his clerk, and who, like his master, had been in a state of perpetual state of terror and torture from the instant that he bestrode his steed.

"What think you of Sir Otto, Jacob France?" asked Master Ramorset.

"He is a fearful man of war, worthy master, and, verily, my heart falls me lest in some sudden fit of rage he may break every bone in our bodies; though verily, Master Ramorset, my joints are already sorely shattered in keeping my seat upon this fiery beast. I would we were safe in London, master."

"So do I, Jacob; but he is to pay me down three thousand golden crowns, which he is to force from Richard Stepmore, and also, he is to give into my hand sundry jewels for the assistance I have rendered him."

"My heart misgives me," replied the weazen-faced clerk, "lest he may turn upon us and spurn us—nay, perhaps, make an end of us, when we shall be of no farther use to him. But that it will be rare delight to behold the humbling of the proud merchant, I would go no farther."

"Rascal, do not think to play the coward and leave me to face Richard Stepmore alone," exclaimed the scrivener, hotly, "or you may find that it is not necessary that he who may break your bones shall be Sir Otto."

The clerk cast a glance of fear, mingled with malice, towards his master, and replied:

"Oh, as for that, I hope no bones are to be broken, as we must hang together, my master, and it is best that you and I should be friends. You remember that one thousand of the gold crowns are to be mine."

"Not if you fail to follow this enterprise to the very end," began the scrivener; but his horse having become restive in being separated from the troop, suddenly darted away at headlong speed towards the cottage, carrying his helpless rider with him.

"Now may the fat fool break his neck," muttered the clerk. "He has accompanied Sir Otto, fearing that the knight would never pay him the reward; and intending, no doubt, to receive it all, my share, and his, and then never pay me. He is here to see that Sir Otto does not play him false, and I am here to see that he does not play me false; and both of us are here to humble Master Stepmore, who has always branded us as a pair of thieves. It may be true that we are thieves, but it is not pleasant to be called so." The meditations of the clerk were here cut short by the sudden determination of his steed to follow his late companions to the cottage; and before Jacob France could brace himself in the saddle to restrain him, his steed had seized the bit, and was dashing down the hill towards the cottage.

Sir Otto had already arrived before the gate of the low fence which surrounded the building, and halted to address the person who had so insolently compared him to the evil one.

This person, whose age appeared more in his features than in the colour of his hair and beard, did not rise from his seat at the door of the cottage as the knight halted within a few feet of him.

His hair and beard were of raven black, as were his heavy eyebrows; while his features declared that he was at least fifty years of age. But this elderly and sedate visage might have been the work of great care and toil, with much exposure to hardship and poverty. Indeed, the greater part of his face, like that of Sir Otto, was hidden by his beard.

His complexion was exceedingly dark, rivalling the swarthiness of the faces of Sir Otto's infidel attendants, who had arrived before the cottage with their leader.

"Rascal," cried the knight, in a haughty tone; "it may be that my followers did not understand you right. Said you aught insulting of Sir Otto Dare?"

"Nothing more than the truth," replied the stranger, calmly, and retaining his pipe in his mouth; Sir Walter Raleigh having introduced the use of tobacco years before.

The audacity and coolness of the stranger, whose accent and garb declared him to be of the common people, amazed Sir Otto; but as he knew that his name was not in good repute, he called out:

"Take care, fellow! I am Sir Otto Dare."

To this the stranger made no reply, but calmly smoked on, while his bold and defiant eye ran over the array of fierce foes and armed men as if he were counting the odds against him.

"It is plain that your insolence needs immediate chastisement," said Sir Otto. "Out with, and let him have a taste of the bastinado."

"Take care Sir Otto," exclaimed the stranger, as

some of the knight's followers sprang from their saddles. "You are in England, and I am an Englishman; you seek the ford."

"Ah, so you are willing to make amends for your insolence?" said Sir Otto, who was eager to cross the river, and who resolved to defer the punishment he had commanded only until the desired information was gained. "Can you lead us to the ford, fellow?"

"Were I mounted I could, but being lame, I cannot walk so far."

"Then it is far?"

"At least, a mile above this cottage."

"You shall be mounted," said Sir Otto.

"And rewarded also? You are a rich knight, I have heard, and I am poor."

"You shall be rewarded," replied Sir Otto, who added to himself, "with a beating within an inch of your life for your insolence."

"First let me place this armour within the cottage," said the man, rising as if very lame, and carefully lifting that upon which he had been at work.

"It is the armour of a knight," remarked Sir Otto.

"Of a brave and noble knight, though not a noble by birth."

"Your master?"

"I serve him, Sir Otto, but I have never called him or any other person master," replied the man, as he disappeared into the cottage with his load.

"Saw you ever so insolent a knave, Omrah?" exclaimed Sir Otto, to his keen-eyed banner-bearer.

"Never, my lord. He hath, too, the frame of a giant," answered Omrah, who had remarked the unusually tall and powerful build of the man. "He is as proud and insolent as he is tattered. He has the dress and accent of a common soldier, but he has the eye of a lord."

"He shall repent his rascally impertinence when I shall have made use of him. See to it, men, that when I cry out the name of the prophet, that you prick him from the saddle with your lances; I will give the signal just before we arrive on the opposite bank, so that he may be well drenched as well as beaten. If in the affair he should be drowned, no matter."

Sir Otto spoke in Arabic, and the gleaming eyes of his dark-faced followers seemed to sparkle with anticipation of the cruel and cowardly deed they were to perform.

CHAPTER VI.

THE stranger soon re-appeared from the cottage door, and limping wearily, as if much fatigued and in great pain, approached the party of the knight, just as the mettlesome steeds of the scrivener and his clerk, bore their awkward and terrified riders into the group.

"S'dearth!" exclaimed Sir Otto, angrily, as he governed his horse, "would you ride over us, Master Ramorset?"

"As heaven is my judge," panted the scrivener, whose fat fingers were clinging to the mane of his steed, "this vile brute ran away with me, your worship."

On hearing the voice of the scrivener, the stranger fixed his keen and vigilant eye upon him with a steady, piercing gaze, and then quickly glanced as keenly at the thin and malicious countenance of the clerk, Jacob France.

Sir Otto, after bestowing a few fierce maledictions upon Ramorset's awkward horsemanship, gave some command to one of his followers, who instantly dismounted.

"Here, fellow," said Sir Otto to the stranger, mount that horse and make haste to lead us to the ford, or we may have the passage to make after dark. I suppose the knight whom you serve is not far off. What is his name?"

"Sir Bertram Stepmore," replied the stranger, as he swung his tall and powerful form into the saddle, with a grace and lightness which seemed to deny that his lameness was as grievous as he had hitherto made it appear.

The unexpected utterance of the name of his rival so startled Sir Otto that he failed to perceive the practised agility of the stranger.

"What!" exclaimed Sir Otto, "has the son of the tradesman been made a knight?"

"I know not that his being the son of a tradesman should bar Sir Bertram Stepmore from any title which honour, courage, intelligence and virtue may win in Christendom," replied the stranger coldly, but in the rough dialect of a peasant.

"You are a blunt knave, and evidently have yet to learn the respect that is due to men of rank," said Sir Otto. "By what name are you called?"

"Edwin Hume."

"You seem to have no desire to waste your breath in words, Hume. I suppose that crazy fellow, the Earl of Essex, in showering knighthood among his satellites, when he was Viceroy of Ireland, made

this son of a tradesman a knight," remarked Sir Otto, with a sneer.

"He won his spurs under Lord Essex, and he fought under Essex, too, at Cadix, in Spain, as well as in Ireland."

"Ho! then the tradesman's brat likes the smell of gunpowder, and the clash of steel?" cried Sir Otto, mockingly.

"Sir Otto Dare will not find Sir Bertram afraid of either," was the curt reply.

"Have you served this wonderful master of yours long?"

"Long enough to know that Nature makes no nobler men. Follow and we will soon be at the ford."

"Not so fast, knave," exclaimed the knight, laying his hand upon the bridle of the other's horse. "Is it true, as has been reported, that Master Stepmore designs to wed his adopted daughter to his son?"

"If it be true, it will be well, for so brave and honourable a knight deserves a lady no less fair and virtuous."

"Ride on, Hume," said Sir Otto; "we will converse as we ride. Close up, men, and see that this surly rascal does not try to play us some trick, in keeping with his insolence."

Sir Otto's followers obeyed; three riding ahead in front of Edwin Hume, three on each side of Hume and Sir Otto, as they rode side by side, and the remainder riding in the rear, with the scrivener and his clerk.

The Saracen who had dismounted to yield the saddle to Edwin Hume, ran with easy speed near the banner-bearer, one hand resting lightly upon the broad Turkish stirrup of the latter.

Edwin Hume flashed his keen and lofty glance contemptuously around him, as he saw these precautions taken to compel his attendance as a guide, but made no remark, nor did he evince any sign of fear or even surprise.

As has been stated, he was a man far exceeding in size and stature any of Sir Otto's troops, though the Saracens, with the exception of one or two, were tall, and athletic men. He was well armed, also, with a broad dagger sheathed in his rough belt of untanned bull's hide, and a long, straight sword hanging at his thigh.

Yet he wore no armour, unless it was hidden beneath his loose and tattered garments, and the great boots whose tops reached above his knees. His head, however, was covered with a steel cap of the fashion then worn by the esquires of knights.

"You ride like a man born to the saddle," remarked Sir Otto, who wished to renew the conversation, and who was in his heart cursing the cool and careless bearing of the man.

"So does Sir Bertram Stepmore."

"Ho! you will speak of that ambitious tape and needle seller. But let us speak of the fair Adelcia Louvalne."

"She can be of no interest to Sir Otto Dare, who has a score of wives at the court of Mahomet III," replied Edwin Hume, as he flashed his powerful and haughty eyes full upon those of the knight.

Sir Otto's beard seemed to bristle with rage, and his swarthy brow grew very dark. He half drew his dagger from its sheath; but there was something in the steady and yet scornful gaze of the bold speaker that for the time restrained his hand.

His attendants had heard the name of their Sultan, the ferocious Mahomet III., for Edwin Hume spoke in a clear and ringing tone; and their dark eyes, for an instant, glanced at the speaker curiously, and then at the wrathful face of their chief.

"This fellow is no common man," thought Sir Otto. "Perhaps he has known me on the continent, or even in Turkey. Ah, I remember now, that Arim and Isaphah reported that he spoke to them in Franco-Turkish. Where learned he that tongue? There is that about the knave that smacks of the travelled soldier. He has an air above his seeming station, which may be assumed or badly disguised. It is palpable that he would appear more than he is, or disguise his true station."

Sir Otto observed the man sharply for a moment, and thought:

"He is some insolent rascal, picked up by that fellow, the tradesman's son, to be petted and spoiled until the surly ragamuffin deems himself his master's equal. It is ever the way with the base-born. The scullion has not had a beating lately, and is, thereby, unduly puffed up. I will see that he be taught better manners. Say, man," he added aloud, "does report speak truly of the beauty of the fair Adelcia?"

"Can you not trust the judgment of your own eyes, Sir Otto?" asked Edwin Hume, carelessly.

"How know you that I have seen her, sirrah?" demanded the knight, much surprised.

"I know that and much more, Sir Otto; and though you are a great knight, and ambassador of a mighty monarch, while I am as you see me, I make bold to tell you to turn your horse's head towards

London, and dream no more of wedding the merchant's adopted daughter."

On hearing these bold words from the lips of one who was so greatly his inferior in rank, Sir Otto's brow became purple with rage, and he raised his riding switch as if about to strike the speaker.

Remembering, however, that he was dependant upon the services of the man in crossing the river, which rolled its swollen waters so fiercely between him and the fair maid of Stepmore Retreat, he lowered his hand, and appeared to content himself with the remark:

"It is well for you, Edwin Hume, that you are upon English ground, and that I take pity on your ignorance. Had you served a gentleman you would know how to reply to a gentleman. I will ask you no more questions, since you are so surly and impetuous, and yet I would do well by you."

"In what, Sir Otto?" asked Hume, whose bold air had not flinched when the knight raised his switch.

"Why, man, from your tattered garb it is plain that your master, Sir Bertram, does not pay you liberally. What say you to becoming follower of mine? You shall be clothed and armed as becomes a trusted follower of Sir Otto Dare, and your wages shall be large."

"Sir Bertram is a rising knight," replied Hume, "nor is it his fault that my garments are old and ragged. He is as liberal as he is noble of nature. I will show you the ford, as I promised, Sir Otto, but farther service under your banner I will not do, and this I do under compulsion."

Sir Otto longed to set his retainers upon the man, yet as he felt sure of soon punishing him, he showed no anger, but concealed his rage, saying:

"The tradesman's son is well served. How long have you been in his service?"

"Long enough to love him, Sir Otto. But here we are at the ford," replied Hume, as he halted abruptly at a spot where the river was broad and noisy from its shallowness, as its swift current swept over the rapids.

He spurred his horse into the water, followed by the whole party, the timid scrivener and his no less timid clerk bringing up the rear. With great ease and skill Hume pursued his way, until he halted at a spot in the midst of the rapids, at the command of Sir Otto.

"What is it, Sir Otto?" asked the guide, who seemed surprised at being ordered to halt. The stream at this spot was swift and angry, thought not more than three feet deep.

"Shall we have to pass through deeper water?" asked the knight.

"No, Sir Otto."

"And do we hold our course straight on, Hume, until we arrive at the opposite shore?"

Edwin Hume did not immediately reply, but seemed to reflect as he glanced about him. This sweeping glance showed him that the turbaned followers of Sir Otto had unslinging their long lances from their rests, and were grasping them as if ready and expecting to use them. He thought it strange, too, that their eyes were fixed upon Sir Otto's face instead of upon him, their guide.

But for this he would have replied differently in answer to the knight's question.

"Our course is straight on, Sir Otto, for some distance, and then we swerve broadly to the right. It is best and safest for me to ride in advance; for, at one point, not more than two can ride abreast, for we have to ride upon a narrow ledge of rock."

"And where is that ledge?"

"Where you see the water foaming and whirling so angrily, Sir Otto."

"It would be rash to attack him here, then," thought Sir Otto, as he gazed about him. "I must defer his punishment until the river be safely passed. Go on," he added aloud.

Edwin Hume moved on, but continued his way straight across, neither swerving to the right, nor approaching the ledge of which he had spoken.

The stream began to deepen rapidly, and again Sir Otto called out:

"Halt! rascal, you said we should have no deeper water!"

"You meant to do me harm, Sir Otto," replied Edwin Hume, in a loud and defiant voice. "You may now find your way across as you can."

"At him!" shouted Sir Otto to his followers. "He dares not go where you dare not follow. Thrust him from his saddle!"

Edwin Hume now directed his steed towards the ledge of rock of which he had spoken, forcing him to plunge through the water with immense leaps.

The animal was soon swimming in deep water, and under the able guidance of his rider safely reached the ledge, towards which the current had swept him.

The knight's followers had made instant and close pursuit; but, being wholly ignorant of the depth of the river and the width of the ford, soon found their

horses swimming in the rapid current, and being borne down the stream.

They saw that Edwin Hume had reached footing for his steed by gaining the ledge, and endeavoured to arrive at the same point. But the ledge itself was fully three feet under water at the point where Hume had found bottom, so that without his perfect knowledge of the locality, the strength of the current, and the exact point at which to aim, it was impossible to effect a landing.

Hume had halted and faced his pursuers the instant that the feet of his horse touched bottom, drawing his long sword as he did so, as if resolved to retreat no farther.

Sir Otto, who with his banner-bearer, the scrivener and his clerk, had halted when he gave the command to halt, gazed eagerly upon the flight and pursuit of the Englishman.

As the current swept the Moslems swiftly towards the ledge where Hume awaited them, he shouted and brandished his sword, so as to startle the already terrified animals; and they, with their riders, drifted by, and were carried on down by the stream towards Walter's cottage.

Each Moslem, as he was carried swiftly past the Englishman, thrust his lance fiercely at his throat or breast, and as Hume easily parried the hasty thrusts, vengeance harled the weapon at his face.

The Englishman was too expert with his sword to be touched, and tossed each lance aside as it was darted at him.

The last of the Moslems to attempt the landing was Omarah, the standard-bearer, who, at a command from Sir Otto, resigned the banner to his chief, and moved boldly into the deep current. The Moslem was a man of great nerve and coolness, and as the stream swept his steed towards the ledge, when nearest the Englishman, he made a feint, as if about to hurl the lance at the face of the latter, and then hurled it fiercely into the breast of Hume's horse.

The animal sank down instantly, for the point of the lance had pierced his heart, and for a moment Hume disappeared beneath the water.

Yet, it was but for an instant; for having freed his feet from the stirrups, his head and shoulders emerged from the stream.

Omarah, having done all he could to injure the Englishman, devoted all his attention to making a speedy and successful landing upon either shore.

Unable to restrain his restive steed, which again determined to follow his companions, the terrified scrivener suddenly became aware that the animal he bestrode was swimming out into the stream, and being hurried down towards the ledge, over which the waters boiled and roared furiously.

Fortunately for the horse, Master Ramorset devoted all his energies of body and soul to retaining his seat in the saddle, otherwise the frantic efforts he would have made to govern the animal, would have strangled him.

The horse of master Franco, imitating immediately the course of his brother steed, plunged onward into deep water, and was hurried towards the ledge, where Edwin Hume stood in the boiling rapids, waist deep, and sword in hand.

The danger of being drowned was sufficient to terrify the scrivener and his clerk, but each uttered a yell of redoubled terror, as the Englishman brandished his sword, when they were swept along almost within reach of his weapon.

They passed him safely, however, and the stream hurried them on towards the cottage, towards which point the Moslems were being carried.

Sir Otto now remained alone, while Edwin Hume began to pursue his way along the submerged ledge towards the opposite shore. The knight now perceived that the lameness of which Hume had spoken was fictitious, for the Englishman forced his way rapidly through the roaring stream, sometimes swinging from rock to rock, until he ascended the opposite bank.

"The fiend seize the knave," muttered Sir Otto, furious with vexation. "He has outwitted me, and I am as far from my journey's end as ever."

He glanced towards the other shore, and saw that his Moslems were rapidly nearing the beach before the little cottage, the sweep of the swollen stream bearing them thitherward. Indeed, several of his followers had already reached the beach, and stood, drenched and dripping, near their exhausted steeds.

Master Ramorset, half-drowned and half-dead with fright, and therefore more like a dead than a live man, had slipped from his saddle, but, grasping the tail of his horse, to which he was clinging with the strength of despair, his clerk had followed the example of his master, voluntarily or involuntarily; and thus this pair of rogues were being towed towards shore in a state of great fear and gasping, but in a very little danger, so long as they retained a desperate clutch upon the tails of their much more courageous steeds.

Night was coming on fast, and the last rays of the long-descended sun scarcely tinged with a faint purplish tint the masses of lowering western clouds as Sir Otto again turned his angry gaze towards the mysterious man who had dared to beard the wrath of so dangerous and powerful an enemy. A restive movement of his horse—which had become impatient and eager to leave the water—caused Sir Otto to loose his grasp upon the staff of his lance. It slipped from his hand into the stream, was seized by the leaping current, whirled and tumbled about, and borne far from him down the dark and angry river.

The knight had instantly endeavoured to snatch it from the waters as it fell from his hand, but his hasty grasp fell short of its aim and so startled his steed that the animal plunged violently forward, lost its feet, and was swept into the deep water.

"Now may you be drowned," said Edwin Hume, aloud, as from the opposite bank he watched the struggles of Sir Otto to force his steed towards the ledge. "It would scarcely be fair reward for so foul a life to be ended by so speedy a death, yet the world would be the gainer."

Sir Otto, however, besides being far better mounted than any of his troop, was no novice in the management of a swimming horse, and succeeded in gaining a firm foothold for his steed upon the submerged rocks of the ledge. He halted there for a moment, and then urged his horse along the narrow and perilous way towards the shore already won by the Englishman.

Edwin Hume, as the stranger called himself, perceiving that the determined knight would probably soon effect the passage of the broken ford, muttered as he watched his progress:

"Now I have more than half a mind to attack you as you land, Sir Otto, and do that which I hoped the river would do for the sake of Adelaide Louvain—make an end of you and all your schemes. There is a smart, too, upon my ribs, where your dagger smote at my heart yonder in Germany, which calls for vengeance. But were I to fall, and fall I might—for your arm is not of the weakest—those who need my aid would lose a good and valuable friend; and were you to be slain, the blame would fall upon Sir Bertram."

So thinking, Edwin Hume turned his face towards Stepmore Retreat, and moved away at a rapid and swinging pace in which was no lameness of limb nor sign of exhaustion.

(To be continued.)

FACETIE.

A HINT TO THE COMMISSIONERS OF INCOME TAX.—Wanted to know—what is the amount returned by the "property-men" of the pantomimes?—*Punch*.

VOX STELLARUM.—It is reported from Greenwich Observatory that there is reason to believe that Berenice's Hair is false. Nothing surprises us now.—*Punch*.

PRECOCIOUS PRINCES.

THE TULARES.

Prince of Asturias: "I am so fond of you, my dear Louis, you can't think. I like you better than all my sisters put together."

Prince Imperial: "I have neither brother nor sister; but I am sure if I had, I should prefer you to them. Do you like my papa?"

Prince of Asturias: "Much better than the king, I can tell you."

Prince Imperial: "I don't see—never mind. I hope you will live in Paris a long time, Alfonso."

Prince of Asturias (laughing): "Thank you. It seems likely, I believe. But if you were all to move, I think that my mamma would follow you."

Prince Imperial: "She is a dear, but we don't mean to move. My papa's dynasty is secure."

Prince of Asturias: "How do you know that, my dear Louis?"

Prince Imperial: "Whisper. He knows all about it. He gives the marshals all they desire, and keeps them in the best temper with us."

Prince of Asturias: "You are a year older than I am, Louis, and therefore I must not touch you. But I will only say that my mamma did exactly the same, and here we are."

Prince Imperial: "Ah!"

Prince of Asturias: "Yes, indeed."

[They meditate a little, poor children, and then luckily recollect the riding lesson.]—*Punch*.

FAIR FROM IT.—The woman who is bent on marrying a man because he is a Lion, should remember that it does not necessarily follow that she will become a Lioness.—*Punch*.

MUSICAL AND MELANCHOLY.—Has the singular fact been remarked that all Operas have exactly the same number of pieces, for they all have—a score?

A thoughtful observer is also puzzled by finding that for a Burlesque to be completely successful, it must have a Breakdown.—*Punch*.

MUSIC AND PATRIOTISM.—Mr. Sims Reeves is carrying the point for which, with true artistic feeling, he has long been struggling, in his own interest, no doubt, but no less in that of the singing world. Mr. Hallé, among other celebrities, has given in his adhesion to the proposed reform. The English Pitch is to be lowered to the French standard. But never shall the English Tar bow before the standard of France. Jammy, Mousseer. That, we are adamant about.—*Punch*.

A YOUNG PHILISTINE.

Sunday School Teacher (examining the Children from the Old Testament).—"And who was the strongest man?"

Pupil (addressed to Light Literature).—"Jack the Giant-Killer, teacher!"—*Punch*.

AWFUL WARNING TO WAGS.—A new literary journal has appeared at Bordeaux, called *L'Huître*. The authorities interdict its sale in the streets. Various pleasing thoughts occurred to our wag, hereon. He first asked why an oyster should not be sold in the streets of Bordeaux as well as in those of London. Then he was imbecile about an oyster being crossed in literature. Then he got upon pearls, but we couldn't stand him any longer, and told him that the second meaning of *L'Huître* described himself. He ran out to get a dictionary, and came in much depressed, having discovered that such second meaning was "The Simploton." We sent him home in a cab, and hope that he is no better than could be expected.—*Punch*.

PRIMROSES.

PRIMROSES, primroses,

They cluster in the hedges,

They dwell where the twinned bank encloses

The stream and all its sedges;

They streak the lanes with sunny light,

They clothe the hills with gold,

Their starry blossoms show as bright

As in dear days of old.

Primroses, primroses, they are the sweetest

flowers

That ever lit fair England's shores, or shone

in springtide bowers.

Primroses, primroses,

They are too bright and glowing

For a world where blight is on the roses,

And tears from eyes are flowing;

They seem like a dream of childhood's hours,

Of the day that never return;

Ere we learnt that earth held faded flowers,

Or that life's sun oft will burn.

Primroses, primroses, they are the sweetest

flowers

That ever lit fair England's shores, or shone

in springtide bowers.

Primroses, primroses,

They speak with angel voices

Of a gladder land where peace reposes,

And the weary heart rejoices,

Of the pavement bright of living gold,

That by sinless feet is trod,

Where the life of loved ones grows not old

In the city of our God.

Primroses, primroses, they are the sweetest

flowers

That ever lit fair England's shores, or shone

in springtide bowers.

T. H.

GEMS.

MANY gain favour, because their amity is not dreaded, and others because it is.

A GREAT philosopher says there are three things which are very difficult—to keep a secret, to forget an injury, and to make good use of leisure.

It takes two to make a quarrel—just remember that. It takes two to get a quarrel fairly going, so hold your tongue the moment a storm is brewing, and you are without the pale of discord.

CHEERFULNESS AND MORBIDNESS.—If we are cheerful and contented, all nature smiles with us; the air seems more balmy, the sky more clear, the ground has a brighter green, the trees have a richer foliage, the flowers a more fragrant smell, the birds sing more sweetly; and the sun, moon, and stars all appear more beautiful. We take our food with relish, and whatever it may be, it pleases us. We feel better for it—stronger and livelier, and fit for exertion. Now, what happens to us if we are ill-tempered and discontented? Why, there is not anything which can please us. We quarrel with our food,

with our dress, with our amusements, with our companions, and with ourselves. Nothing comes right for us; the weather is either too hot or too cold, too dry or too damp. Neither sun, nor moon, nor stars have any beauty; the fields are barren, the flowers lustreless, and the birds silent. We move about like some evil spirit, neither loving nor beloved by anything.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

DANGER OF GIVING STRONG DOSES OF CAMPHOR.

—A case illustrating the above has recently been brought under the notice of the Société de Médecine et de Pharmacie de Grenoble. An enema consisting of five grammes of camphor dissolved in the yolk of an egg was given to a child three years of age suffering from typhoid fever. Symptoms of poisoning soon manifested themselves: convulsions, lividity of the countenance, stupor, arrest of the urinary secretion, &c. The employment of coffee sufficed to restore the child.

COFFEE AS A DEODORIZER.—The value of coffee as a deodorizer for the neutralizing of foul odours that emanate from organic bodies in a state of decay, is that it can be used to advantage where other disinfecting agents would be inadmissible. In cases where rats died in the spaces between the floors of dwellings, the intolerable odour arising therefrom can be most effectually removed by placing a pound or two of fresh burnt and ground coffee between the floors. For the purification of a sick room it is incomparably superior to burning sage, as it has a beneficial chemical action on the atmosphere of the room, and gives besides an agreeable perfume.

THE PRESERVATION OF EGGS AND MILK.—Many methods of preserving eggs have been recorded. There is one which is used in the provisioning of Paris on a great scale and is described as the most sure. The eggs are plunged in wire baskets, each holding a dozen, into cauldrons of boiling water, during about a minute. A thin layer of the egg coagulates on the inner surface of the shell, and prevents the infiltration of air which is speedily fatal to the freshness of the egg. Some of our contemporaries, in alluding to this fact, seem to be unaware that milk may be preserved in the same manner. It must be placed in a glass bottle and held in the boiling water for about two minutes; the bottle is then hermetically corked.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A PENSION of 350*l.* per annum has been granted to Captain Cameron, on account of his sufferings as a captive in Abyssinia, while in fulfilment of his duty as consul at Massowah.

A NEPHEW OF SIR WALTER SCOTT.—William Scott, son of Sir Walter's brother Daniel, is an inmate of the charitable "Home" of the St. Andrew's Society of Montreal. He went to Canada in 1828, and was injured by an accident some years ago, and is in feeble health. On week-days, this nephew of the author of "Waverley" saws and splits firewood for the Home. He is sixty-four years of age.

CURIOUS DISTINCTION.—I have heard it remarked that the distinctive difference between an English and a purely Irish face is, that the former looks as if the hand of nature had passed over it downwards, when coming into the world, whilst the Irish face looks as if, on that occasion, the hand had been gently passed over the features in a contrary or upward direction.—"Realities of Irish Life," by W. Stewart Trench.

PEERS IN THEIR MINORITY.—The following is a list of Peers who are now minors and the dates on which they will come of age: The present year, Earl of Donoughmore and Lord Beaumont; 1870, Marquis of Ely, Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, Earl Banfurly, Lord Montagu, and Lord Rivers; 1871, the Earl of Pembroke; 1872, Earl of Guilford, Earl Waldegrave, and Lord Rossmore; 1873, Lord Manners; 1875, Lord Muskerry; 1878, Lord Rodney; and 1884, Viscount Clifden.

EXTRAORDINARY MILDNESS OF THE SEASON.—On Monday, December 21st, were gathered, in a field belonging to Mr. William Henry Bethell, of Edgarley, Glastonbury, a quantity of as fine, fully-developed mushrooms, as they would be at their proper season, by a man in his employ, making the third gathering during the last December, thus showing the extraordinary mildness of the season. On Christmas day were gathered in a garden, on Portishead-hill, the following out-of-door flowers: Roses, stocks, nig-onette, campanulas, carnations, and honeysuckles. The most remarkable of all was the honeysuckle, as its being in bloom in England at this season of the year is almost unparalleled.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

C. D. F.—In all probability oplan.
 R. G. D.—Highgate and Piccadilly, W.
 G. K. D.—We think you are correct.
 S. L. N.—You are not a legal apprentice.
 AN OLD SAILOR.—Without doubt, the marriage was legal.
 W. TOWNSEND.—Forward to us your communication, and we will insert it at once.
 G. S. B.—A knowledge of Latin is decidedly necessary for employment in the office you mention.
 R. JACKSON.—You should apply to the editor of THE LONDON READER, 354, Strand.
 H. TANNER.—The residence of the Earl Nelson is Trafalgar House, near Salisbury, Wiltshire.
 ORLANDO.—Apply to the nearest district post-office, and you will obtain every information.
 A. B. C.—We answered your letter in a recent number of THE LONDON READER.
 D. E. F.—If you have any regard for your future happiness, avoid the man as you would a pestilence.
 ARTHUR ANDREWS.—We know of no better remedy than alum and Epsom salts for the purpose. We have often tried this and found it effectual.
 FAIR PLAY.—Your only course is to appeal to your landlord's honour or kindness, for, assuredly, he has the right to let his shooting.
 DON QUIXOTE.—"Macfarlane's History of British India" is but a mere compilation. If you wish for a good history you should purchase "Mill's History of British India."
 A NURSE.—You will find "Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup" perfectly harmless, and can procure it of any medicine dealer in England, Ireland, or Scotland.
 LORONDA.—Bells were first used in churches by order of Pope Joan IX., about the year 900, as a defence, it was said, by ringing them, against thunder and lightning.
 E. F.—We think not, but your simpler course would be to ask the post-office keeper, who would give you immediate and accurate information.
 STERLING.—Peep o' Day Boys were insurgents in Ireland, who visited the houses of their antagonists at break of day, in search of arms. They first appeared in 1784, and for a long period were the terror of the country.
 BETA.—The Foundling Hospital is for the support of illegitimate children, and restoration of their mothers to a virtuous life. Entrance is obtained by the personal application of the mother before the child is twelve months old.
 SHERKSHED.—Be patient, bide your time, and all may be as you wish; in the meantime, remember that "to marry in haste is to repent at leisure," and also, that a woman should be sought, not seek.
 SARA SYMONDS.—We are always happy to receive, and to give our opinion of, any MS. sent to our office. We cannot, however, offer any opinion of MS. without a previous perusal.
 A. QUERIST.—1. Simply the ordinary duties of a clerk—captain's clerk is the usual designation. 2. There is no regular examination, but you must have the interest of the captain of the vessel. 3. Your handwriting is very good.
 KATE.—We can give no reply without a perusal of the MS. Our motto is, of course, that "the labourer is worthy of his hire," but then the quality of the labour must be up to a certain mark.
 WALTER.—"Honesty is the best policy." It is to God and to man; the heart that can be gratified by dishonest gains, the ambition that can be satisfied by dishonest means, the mind that can be devoted to dishonest purposes, must be of the worst order.
 CORNELIA.—The *Fax* is a small tablet, generally made of silver, turned *tabula pasci* or *oculorum*, kissed by the Roman Catholic priests and laity, substituted for the primal kiss of peace in the early church. The *Fax* is said to have been introduced about the twelfth century.
 REUBEN.—"The Pharmacopoeia" is a book of directions for the preparation of medicines, published by the College of Physicians. In 1862 the General Medical Council were empowered to prepare and sell a new "Pharmacopoeia," to supersede those of the colleges of London, Edinburgh, and Dublin.
 GEORGE.—*Dedimus potestatem*, means "we have given power." It is a writ in law, whereby commission is given to one or more private persons to assist for the expedition of some act belonging to the judge. The words are also used to denote the commission of a justice of the peace, which begins in the same manner.
 FAIRLIGHT.—Custom of Throwing an Old Shoe at Weddings.—In Ben Jonson's time this seems to have been practised as at present, for he alludes to it in "The Gypsies"

(1640), and it is also mentioned by John Heywood (1598), "for good lucke cast an old shoe after mee." This practice, however, is derived from a still more ancient source. Amongst the Hebrews, in transferring property, a shoe was thrown upon it, and we find an allusion to this in the book of Ruth, iv. 7. "A man plucked off his shoe and gave it to his neighbour; and this was a testimony in Israel," of the transfer of possession being made. Now, when a lady is married a transfer of property is made, and the parents throw a shoe at the bride, to signify that they henceforth resign to the bridegroom all right and claim to their child, who, with all her worldly goods, is henceforth to be the property of her husband.

GEORGE.—*Mousquetaires* or *musquetaires* were horse-soldiers under the old French régime, raised by Louis XIII. in 1622. This corps was considered a military school for the French nobility; it was disbanded in 1644, but was restored in 1657. A second company was created in 1660, and formed Cardinal Mazarin's guard.

DAVID.—The Monument of London was begun in 1671, and finished in 1677. The pedestal is 40 feet high, and the edifice is altogether 202 feet, that being the distance of its base from the spot where the fire which it commemorates commenced; it is the loftiest isolated column in the world. Its erection cost about 14,500*l*. The staircase is composed of black marble, composed of 345 steps, by which a balcony is reached.

W. R. J.—We can give no opinion without seeing the "brass;" if picked up as you say, and where you say, it is, in all probability, spurious, that is, was laid there for the purpose of being found. If it be a real brass, you should apply to a dealer in curiosities; who, by the way, would give you but little indeed for it. Curiosities are not very marketable at any time.

EMILIA.—Artificial manners, and such as spring from good taste and refinement, can never be mistaken, and differ as widely as gold and tinsel. How captivating is gentleness of manner, derived from true humility, and how faint is every imitation! The one resembles a glorious rainbow, spanning a dark cloud; the other, its pale attendant, the water-gale. Let the manners arise from the mind, without any disguise of the genuine emotions of the heart.

L. A.—Kaleidoscope is an optical instrument, which, by an arrangement of mirrors, produces a symmetrical section of beautiful images. It was invented by Sir David Brewster, of Edinburgh; it was first suggested in 1814, and perfected in 1817, when it became popular. It was intended to assist jewellers, glass painters, and other ornamental artists, in the formation of patterns.

APERT.

So long apart! so long apart!
 How slowly creep the moments by!
 Love, knowest thou no magic art,
 To banish Time till thou art nigh?
 So long apart! it should not be;
 My time-piece is this throbbing heart;
 Moments alone I pass with thee,
 But ages die while we're apart.
 So long apart!
 I knew not, ere between us lay
 This weary bridge of days and miles,
 How closely Time and Joy were wed,
 Within the magic of thy smiles.
 Like dusk-winged bats the hours flap by,
 And fling their shadows on my heart;
 Like summer birds that skim the sky,
 They'd flit were we no more apart.
 So far apart! M. K. D.

AROTLE.—Gladiators were originally malefactors, who fought for their lives, or captives who fought for freedom; they were exhibited at the funeral ceremonies of the Romans, probably following the Greek custom of sacrificing to the manes of deceased warriors the prisoners taken in battle. Gladiator fights were afterwards exhibited at festivals; these combats were suppressed in the East by Constantine the Great, and in the West by Theodoric.

AGATHA.—A good wife shines most at home; it is by the fireside that her prudence and love are most displayed, and where she cultivates those homely virtues which blind her husband with silken cords closely to her; it is there that her purity, her tenderness, and her forbearance are best seen. She is the brightest ornament both in prosperity and adversity. When fortune smiles, she seizes the happy time, and turns it to the best account, and if the dark days of adversity come, she is the consoler and comforter.

HOWARD.—The Juggernaut, or "Lord of the World," one of the incarnations of Krishna, is an idol formed of an irregular pyramidal black stone, with two rich diamonds to represent eyes, the nose and mouth are painted vermilion. The number of pilgrims that visit the god is stated to be 1,200,000 annually. A great many never return, and to the distance of 160 miles, the way is strewn with human bones. The Temple has existed about 800 years. The state allowance was suspended in 1851.

ALFREDO.—"Janissaries," an order of infantry in the Turkish army, were originally young prisoners trained to arms, and were first organised by Orkhan, and remodelled by his son Amurath I., about 1360. In later days they degenerated from their strict discipline, and several times deposed the Sultan. Owing to an insurrection of these troops in 1826, when 2,000 of them were killed on the spot, the Ottoman army was re-organised, and a firman was issued two days afterwards, declaring the abolition of the Janissaries.

F. S. J.—There is a common belief that if a person has a certificate he can shoot wherever he pleases until he has been warned not to trespass, and can then only be proceeded against for the trespass. But a conviction for trespass in pursuit of game may be obtained against a certificated person, although notice not to trespass has never been given; and a person holding a certificate may, under the Poaching Prevention Act of 1862, be searched by a police-constable, and if he is convicted his gun may be confiscated, and a fine of 5*l*. inflicted.

ADOLPHUS.—Boxing Day.—In former times boxes were placed in churches, in order to collect the alms of the worshippers for promiscuous charities, and were opened on Christmas Day. The contents of these boxes were distributed on the following day by the priests, and called "the dole of the Christmas Box," or "the box money." Hence the origin of "Boxing Day." It was customary for the heads of houses

to give small sums of money to their subordinates to put into the box before mass on Christmas Day. Here was the beginning of "Christmas boxes." Somewhat later, apprentices came to carry round a box to their masters' customers for small gratuities, the charitable application of the funds being gradually lost sight of.

Gladly the boy, with Christmas box in hand,
 Throughout the town his devious route pursues;
 And of his master's customers implores
 The yearly mite.

It is said that since 1836 the practice of asking for Christmas boxes has been gradually dying out, but we confess we have not noticed any great diminution in this particular, as far as our own experience has gone.

STANLEY.—In the United States there are said to be fifty-three religious sects. Amongst them are ten different kinds of Baptists, nine of Methodists, thirteen of Presbyterians, and two of Quakers. The Baptists number 1,734,373 members or communicants, and the Methodists 1,651,732. The number professing the Roman Catholic religion is 3,177,140. The Baptists are divided into the following curious sects—viz., Regular, Anti-Mission, Seventh-day, Six-principle, Free-will, Riverbroom, Winebrennerians, Dunkers, Man-nocites, and Campbellites. The Quakers are divided into Orthodox and Hicksites.

OKLANDO.—I do not remember an illustrated History of Europe. For a few shillings, four or five, you can get an epitome of Sir Archibald Alison's, or Russell's, History of Modern Europe. 2. There was a work published some few years since. This you may frequently find at the cheap bookstalls. 3. For deafness: Bruise in a marble mortar the flowers, leaves, and stalks of fresh fozglove; mix the juice with double the quantity of brandy. The method of using it is to drop one drop in the ear every night, and then moisten a piece of lint with a little of the juice; put this also in the ear, and take it out the next morning, until the cure be effected. 4. Handwriting quite suitable for the berth you mention.

JULIA.—Respondent must be tall, good looking, and good tempered.

MARY A. W.—tall, fair, domesticated, and fond of home. Respondent must be tall, dark, and respectable.

JANE W. C.—tall, dark, very pretty, and has a little money. Respondent must be tall, fair, and fond of home.

FRED, nineteen, 5ft. 3in., good tempered, and fond of home. Respondent must be respectable and good looking.

ANNIE LAUREN, little, light hair and eyes. Respondent must be about twenty-one, and fond of home.

L. C., twenty, tall, fair, affectionate, and domesticated. Respondent must be tall and gentlemanly.

FRANCIS, seventeen, amiable and lively, dark brown hair, blue eyes, and domesticated. Respondent must be tall and dark.

MAY BLOSSOM, twenty-three, little, brown hair, and blue eyes. Respondent must be about thirty, dark, black hair, and have a moderate income.

ELIZA S., tall, light hair, blue eyes, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must be tall, dark, and affectionate; good looks no object.

CHARLES, nineteen, 5ft. 9in., golden brown hair, expressive eyes, fair, and accomplished. Respondent must be good looking and tall.

PILOT, twenty-five, 5ft. 5in., dark hair, hazel eyes, good tempered, and very fond of home. Respondent must have 50*l*. a year, and be of a cheerful disposition.

J. SPURGEON (seaman gunner), 5ft. 4in., dark, good looking, amiable temper, and fond of home. Respondent must be about twenty-two.

EDMUND, twenty-one, medium height, brown hair, hazel eyes, and fond of home. Respondent must be tall, dark, and a tradesman.

GUEST and IDA—"Gassy," nineteen, tall, fair, pretty, and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, dark, and have a good income. "Kia," eighteen, medium height, dark, good looking, and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, fair, and have a moderate income.

META and ALICE MAUD—"Meta," twenty, medium height, dark hair, blue eyes, thoroughly domesticated, and fond of home. Respondent must be tall, dark, and fond of music; a mechanic preferred. "Alice Maud," tall, dark, blue eyes, thoroughly domesticated, and good tempered. Respondent must be tall, fair, and good tempered.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

ANNE D. is responded to by—"D. C. S."
 MAGGIE by—"J. H. Turner," twenty-five, 5ft. 5in., brown hair, grey eyes, steady and sober.

ELIZA by—"Arthur Gray," twenty-two.

HARRIET by—"H. T.," nineteen, 5ft. 9in., dark hair and eyes, good tempered, and fond of home.

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London: Printed and Published for the Proprietor, at 354, Strand, by J. WATSON.